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THE Count OF Monte Cristo

ADAPTED FROM THE CLASSIC NOVEL BY **ALEXANDRE DUMAS**

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO

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MARVEL CLASSICS COMICS

STAN LEE presents

THE Count OF Monte Cristo

By Alexander Dumas

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alexandre Dumas, a French novelist and dramatist, was born in Villers-Cotterets in 1802, the son of a general in Napoleon's Army. He received a basic education from a priest and entered the office of a local solicitor.

After he met General Foy, he became a clerk in the service of the Duke of Orleans. At that time he began to collaborate with Leuven in the production of vaudevilles and melodramas.

In 1844 he produced, with the help of Auguste Maquet, his new collaborator, a famous "cloak and dagger" romance, *The Three Musketeers*. And, in 1845, he followed even more triumphantly with *The Count of Monte Cristo*.

Much has been written about Dumas' share in the novels which bear his name. The Dumas-Maquet series is undoubtedly the best. But the manuscripts of novels still exist in Dumas' handwriting and attest to his skill as a narrator.

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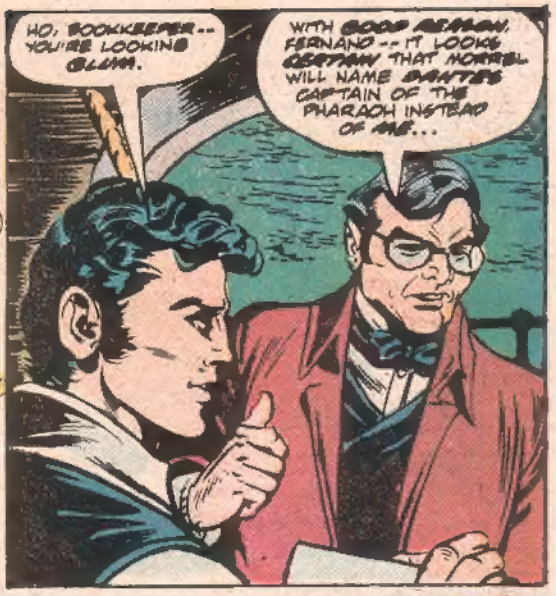
The Count of Monte Cristo

ON THE 24th OF FEBRUARY, 1815, THE MARSEILLES PORT LOOKOUT SIGNALLED THAT THE THREE-MASTER PHARAON WAS COMING UP THE HARBOR. SHE BELONGED TO MORREL AND SON AND WAS HOMEWARD BOUND FROM SMYRNA, TRIESTE AND NAPLES...
SHE CAME IN SLOWLY AND THE WORD SOON SPREAD AROUND THE DOCKS THAT SHE HAD MET WITH SOME MISHAP -- THOUGH IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT THE PHARAOH HERSELF WAS IN TRIM CONDITION.
WHICH LEFT ONLY THE MEN ABOARD HER...

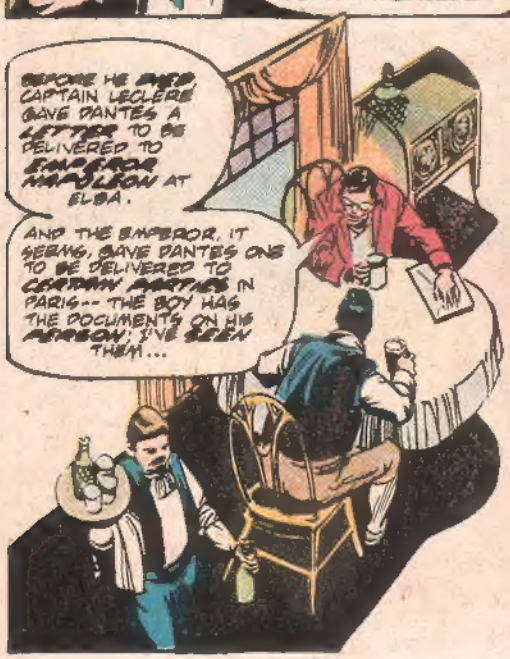
E AHOY THE PHARAOH! I'M COMING ABOARD!
DANTES, IS THAT YOU?!
GOOD MORNING, M. MORREL -- I'VE BROUGHT THE PHARAOH SAFELY HOME.
YOU'D BUT WHAT ABOUT CAPTAIN LE-- DANTES, WHAT'S HAPPENED?!
A GREAT MISFORTUNE BEFELL US, M'SIEU. OFF CIVITI VECCHIA, WE LOST OUR HONEST CAPTAIN LECLERE.
GOOD LORD, BUT DANTES -- THE CARGO?!
AS SAFE AS THE PHARAOH, AND WORTH UPWARDS OF TWENTY THOUSAND FRANCS.
BUT CAPTAIN LECLERE IS DEAD, SIR -- NOT FALLEN OVER-BOARD BUT CARRIED OFF BY BRAIN FEVER.
WE ARE ALL MORTAL, EDMOND -- AND THE OLD MUST EVER GIVE WAY TO THE YOUNG.
YOU HAVE DONE WELL IN THIS INSTANCE, MY BOY.
AND I AM THINKING THAT MY PARTNERS AND I NEED LOOK NO FARTHER FOR THE PHARAOH'S NEXT CAPTAIN
M. MORREL -- CAN IT BE TRUE?! YOU MEAN TO NAME ME CAPTAIN OF THE PHARAOH?!
I AM A MAN OF MY WORD, EDMOND.
EDMOND! EDMOND DANTES!
MERCEDES!
EXCUSE ME, SIR -- BUT I SPY MY BELOVED MERCEDES AND I --
I UNDERSTAND, MY BOY -- WE'LL TALK MORE LATER.
OH, MY LOVE, MY LOVE -- I, MISSED YOU SO!
AND I, YOU, MY DEAREST ONE.
BUT SOFT, MERCEDES -- NO LONGER ARE YOU BETROTHED TO THE PHARAOH'S FIRST MATE -- BUT TO HER NEW CAPTAIN.

HER CAPTAIN--?! OH, EDMOND, YOUR FATHER WILL BE SO PROUD--LET'S HURRY TO TELL HIM!
ALL MAN EDMOND DANTES, NOT YET TWENTY AND ALREADY MASTER OF THE SHIP THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN MINE.
BUT BEWARE, BOY, FOR YOU'VE AN ENEMY IN DANGLARS HERE--ALL I ASK IS A CHANCE TO RUIN YOU AND I'LL...


HO, BOOKKEEPER--YOU'RE LOOKING GLUM.
WITH GOOD REASON, FERNAND--IT LOOKS CERTAIN THAT MOREL WILL NAME DANTES CAPTAIN OF THE PHARAOH INSTEAD OF ME...

DANTES!
WHAT--DO YOU HATE HIM, TOO?!
MORE THAN ANY MAN CAN KNOW, DANGLARS--FOR HE HAS COME BETWEEN ME AND THE WOMAN I LOVE MOST IN THIS WORLD--MERCEDES!

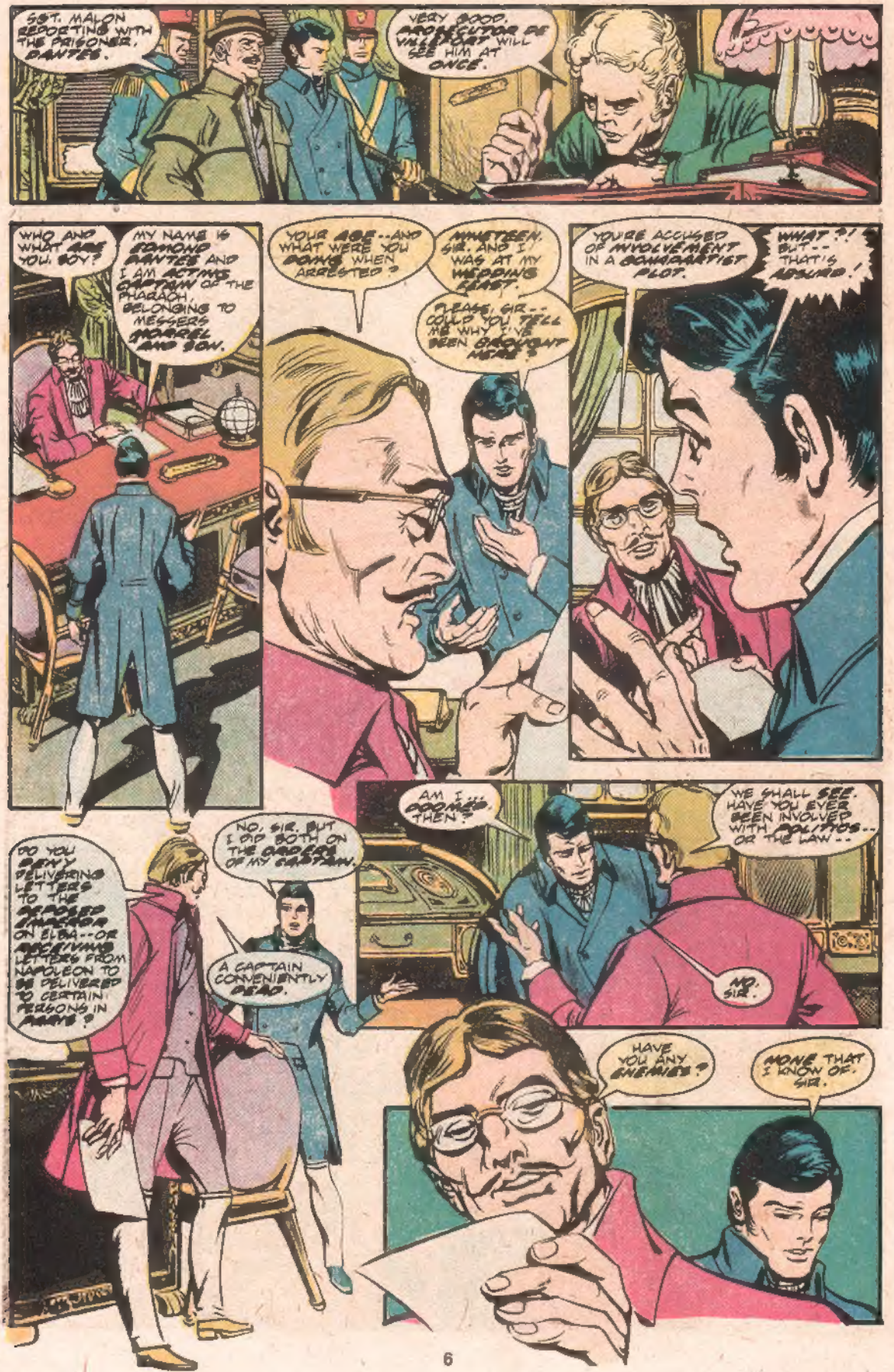
I SEE. YOU KNOW, THEY ARE TO BE MARRIED TOMORROW.
I WOULD DO ANYTHING TO PREVENT THAT.
WOULD YOU, NOW? IF SO, FERNAND MONDEGO, THEN I THINK I KNOW A WAY WE CAN ACCOMPLISH BOTH OUR AIMS.


BEFORE HE DIED CAPTAIN LECLERE GAVE DANTES A LETTER TO BE DELIVERED TO EMPEROR NAPOLEON AT ELBA.
AND THE EMPEROR, IT SEEMS, GAVE DANTES ONE TO BE DELIVERED TO CERTAIN PARTIES IN PARIS--THE BOY HAS THE DOCUMENTS ON HIS PERSON; I'VE SEEN THEM...

LETTERS THAT PERHAPS INVOLVE DANTES IN A BONAPARTIST PLOT...?
EXACTLY.
ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS--ANONYMOUSLY--DENOUNCE HIM TO THE ROYAL PROSECUTOR... AND THE BOY'S FATE IS SEALED!

THE LETTER WAS WRITTEN THAT AFTERNOON BEFORE SUNSET... ALL THE GONGS IN CATTARO COULD NOT NOW WAKE DANTES...
CURSE YOU, DANGLARS--WHY HASN'T ANYTHING HAPPENED?! IT'S BEEN OVER A DAY SINCE WE SENT THE LETTER!
CALM YOURSELF, FERNAND. THESE THINGS TAKE TIME.
WELL, TIME'S RUNNING OUT! IN ANOTHER HOUR, DANTES AND MERCEDES WILL BE MARRIED AND ALL OUR EFFORTS WILL HAVE BEEN FOR NOTHING!
FERNAND, MY DEAREST FRIEND... HERE YOU ARE. I'VE BEEN LOOKING EVERYWHERE FOR YOU.
MERCEDES! YOU... AH... KNOW M. DANGLARS, I'M SURE.
CONGRATULATIONS ON THIS HAPPY OCCASION MON FILLE. REMEMBER WHAT I SAID, FERNAND...
FERNAND, YOU FOOL! DO YOU WANT SOMEONE TO HEAR US?!
WILL YOU GIVE ME YOUR BLESSING AS WELL, FERNAND?
NOT WHEN I WISH IT WERE I MARRYING YOU, INSTEAD OF DANTES. I LOVE YOU, MERCEDES.
BUT I DO NOT LOVE YOU, FERNAND. MY HEART BELONGS TO ANOTHER.
MERCEDES, IT'S ALMOST TIME...
I HOPE YOU'RE ENJOYING YOURSELF, M. MONDEGO.
HERE'S TO THE HAPPY COUPLE... MAY THEIR LIVES TOGETHER BE LONG AND HAPPY...!
I DEMAND ADMITTANCE IN THE NAME OF THE LAW!

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS -- WE ARE A PEACEFUL GATHERING!
AND WHO MIGHT YOU BE, SIR?
M. MORREL OF MORREL AND SON, MERCHANT SHIPOWNERS.
THEN STAND ASIDE. I HAVE NO BUSINESS WITH YOU.
IS THERE A MAN HERE KNOWN AS EDMOND DANTES?
I AM DANTES.
EDMOND DANTES, I ARREST YOU IN THE NAME OF THE LAW
MAKE HIM.
ON WHAT CHARGE?!
I CANNOT SAY. YOU'LL BE TOLD THAT AT THE PROPER TIME.
NOW WILL YOU COME PEACEABLY OR MUST WE MANACLE YOU?
I'LL GIVE NO TROU--
EDMOND WHAT'S HAPPEN-ING--?!
IT'S ALL RIGHT, FERNAND. THERE'S BEEN SOME MISTAKE. THAT'S ALL. I'LL BE ALL STRAIGHTENED OUT IN NO TIME AT ALL. JUST YOU WAIT.
GOOD-BYE MERCEDES!
ADIEU! ADIEU! AH, SOPHY, DON'T...MY... EDMOND, A...DIEU...!


SGT. MALON REPORTING WITH THE PRISONER, DANTES.
VERY GOOD. PROCUREUR DE VILLEFORT WILL SEE HIM AT ONCE.
WHO AND WHAT ARE YOU, BOY?
MY NAME IS EDMOND DANTES AND I AM ACTING CAPTAIN OF THE PHARAON, BELONGING TO MESSERS MORREL AND SON.
YOUR AGE--AND WHAT WERE YOU DOING WHEN ARRESTED?
NINETEEN, SIR. AND I WAS AT MY WEDDING FEAST.
PLEASE, SIR--COULD YOU TELL ME WHY I'VE BEEN BROUGHT HERE?
YOU'RE ACCUSED OF INVOLVEMENT IN A BONAPARTIST PLOT.
WHAT?! BUT--THAT'S ABSURD!
AM I DOOMED THEN?
WE SHALL SEE. HAVE YOU EVER BEEN INVOLVED WITH ZELITOS--OR THE LAW--
NO, SIR.
DO YOU RECALL DELIVERING LETTERS TO THE EXILED LIEUTENANT ON ELBA--OR RECEIVING LETTERS FROM NAPOLEON TO BE DELIVERED TO CERTAIN PERSONS IN PARIS?
NO, SIR. BUT I DID BOTH ON THE ORDERS OF MY CAPTAIN.
A CAPTAIN CONVENIENTLY DEAD.
HAVE YOU ANY ENEMIES?
NONE THAT I KNOW OF, SIR.

YOU ARE MISTAKEN, THEN, DANTES--FOR IF YOU ARE INNOCENT OF THESE CHARGES--
AND I AM, SIR!
--THEN SOMEONE HAS GONE TO A GREAT DEAL OF TROUBLE TO SLANDER YOU. AND, PERHAPS, WORSE.
HOWEVER, LOOKING AT THE EVIDENCE --AND AT THE MAN CHARGED-- I FORESEE NO PROBLEM.
IF YOU ARE GUILTABLE, IT WAS MERELY ONLY-- AND THIS WAS LEGITIMIZED BY THE ORDERS OF YOUR CAPTAIN.
ONE LAST THING BEFORE YOU GO -- TO WHOM WAS THIS LETTER ADDRESSED?
TO A M. MORTIER, RUE COQ-HERON, PARIS...
M. DE VILLEFORT, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? YOU LOOK ILL!
I'M... FINE. AH... WAIT OUTSIDE A MOMENT, DANTES, IF YOU PLEASE...
GOD IN HEAVEN-- THIS LETTER IS ADDRESSED TO MY FATHER!
CURSE THAT OLD MAN! MUST HIS LOYALTY TO BONAPARTE HAUNT ME FOREVER?!
I'VE CHANGED MY NAME--NOBILITY TO DE VILLEFORT--MADE A PLACE FOR MYSELF IN THE SERVICE OF THE KING...
RIPPP
...AND NOW THIS LETTER THREATENS TO DESTROY ALL I'VE WORKED SO HARD FOR.
THIS LETTER -- AND THE BOY WHO BROUGHT IT SHOULD HE EVER SUSPECT WHAT IT CONTAINS, AND THEN LEARN MY TRUE IDENTITY.
BUT IF EDMOND DANTES WERE SIMPLY TO DISAPPEAR...
...I WOULD BE SAFE.
SERGEANT!

ALL RIGHT, LAD. TIME TO GO.
AT M. DE VILLEFORT'S ORDERS?
IF YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOOD FOR YOU, BOY, YOU'LL KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT!
BUT WHERE ARE YOU TAKING ME?
YOU'LL FIND THAT OUT WHEN YOU GET THERE, WON'T YOU?
AFTER A BRIEF, BUMPY RIDE THRU MARSEILLES, EDMOND FOUND HIMSELF TWIXT TERROR--STILL UNDER POLICE GUARD--TO A CUSTOMS HOUSE BARQUE...
IN THE NAME OF GOD--WHERE ARE WE GOING?!
WHERE ALL TRAITORS GO, FOOL--JUST BE THANKFUL IT ISN'T A ONE-WAY VISIT TO MADAME GUILLOTINE...
WHAT'S THE MATTER, DANTES--DID YOU THINK YOU WERE GOING FREE?
OH NO... SWEET LORD IN HEAVEN, NO...
NOT THE CHATEAU D'IF!
AND SO IT WAS, ON THIS FIRST DAY OF MARCH, IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD, 1815...
...THAT EDMOND DANTES--FALSELY ACCUSED AND CONDEMNED WITHOUT TRIAL--CAME TO THAT MOST MONSTROUS OF PRISONS, THE CHATEAU D'IF.
THE GREAT FORTRESS ROCK DOMINATED THE MARSEILLES HARBOR, ITS MASSIVE WALLS PROCLAIMING TO THE WORLD THAT HERE WAS A CAGE FROM WHICH NO PRISONER EVER ESCAPED...
...EXCEPT IN DEATH!

PART 2:

A SCRATCHING IN THE DARK!

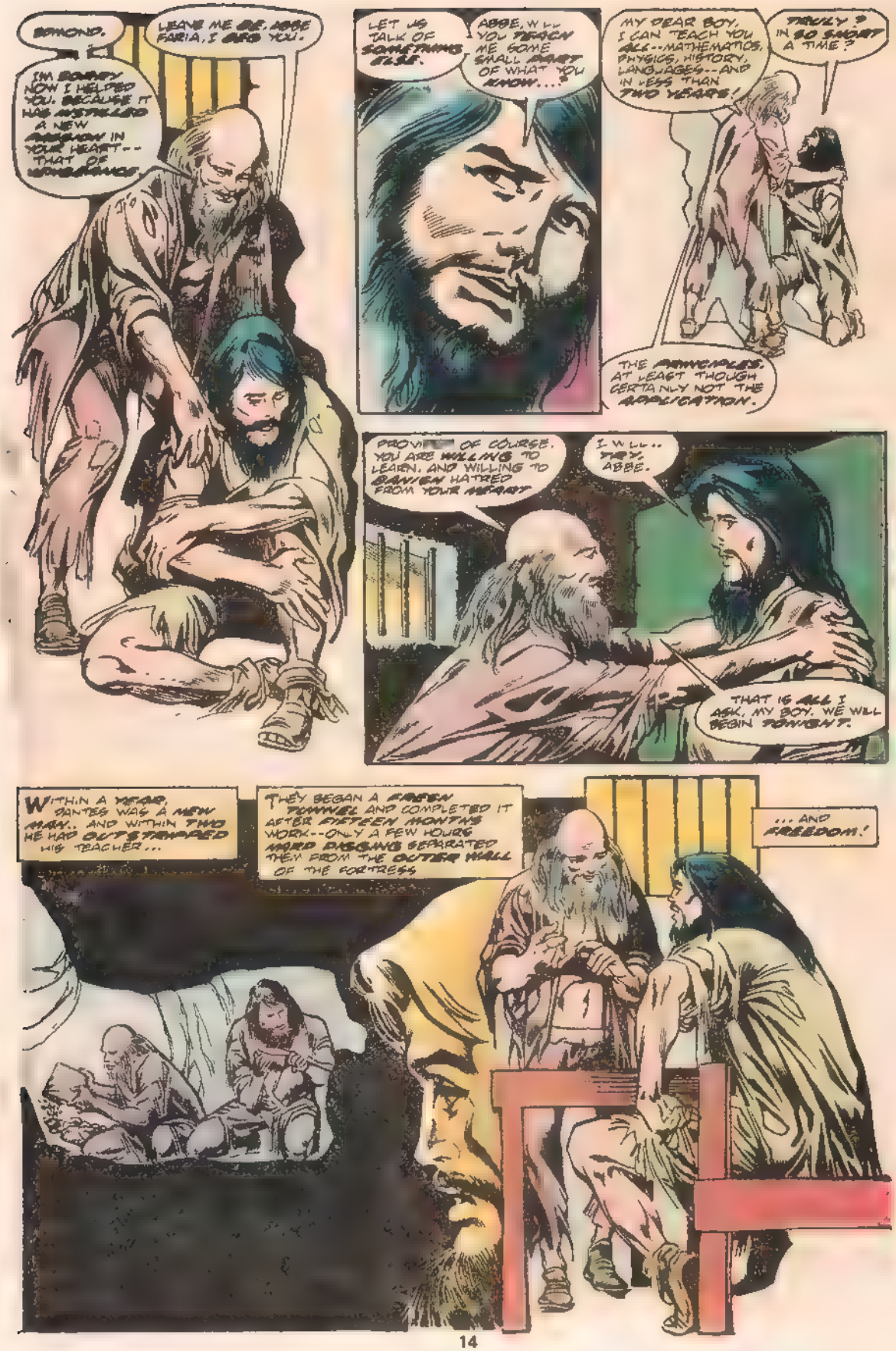
THE YEARS PASSED, AND EDMOND DANTES BECAME PRISONER NUMBER 34 HIS LIFE WAS BOUND BY THE GRAY STONE WALLS OF HIS CELL AND ONE DAY WENT BY MUCH LIKE THE NEXT...
FOR A TIME HE HOARDED THIS GHASTLY MISTAKE WOULD BE PUT RIGHT, THAT HE WOULD BE RELEASED...
...BUT NO RELEASE CAME. NONE WOULD EVER COME
HE HAD BEEN CONDEMNED, IMPRISONED AND THEN FINALLY FORGOTTEN ALMOST AS IF HE'D NEVER EXISTED.
AND SO, HAVING NOTHING LEFT TO LIVE FOR, DANTES RESOLVED TO DIE. HE CHOSE TO STARVE HIMSELF THROWING HIS MEAGRE FARE OUT HIS CELL WINDOW TO RESIST TEMPTATION...
HE'D BEGUN HIS FAST THREE DAYS AGO...

...AND NOW LIES ON THE BORDERS OF THAT SHADOWED COUNTRY KNOWN AS DEATH. ANOTHER DAY WILL SEE HIM ENTOMB IT... UNLESS...
WHAT'S... THAT...?!
I MUST BE DELIRIOUS... IMAGINING THAT I CAN HEAR SOMETHING SCRATCHING ALONG INSIDE THE WALL..
KRITZ
KRIK
WHAT! I'M NOT IMAGINING THINGS!
THE SOUND IS REGULAR. THE SAME AS WOULD BE MADE BY SOMEONE DIGGING AT THE WALLS WITH A SMALL SPADE OR KNIFE!
HELLO! HELLO! CAN YOU HEAR ME?! IS ANYONE THERE...?!
OH NO--! THE SCRATCHING IS STOPPED! WHOEVER IT IS MUST THINK ME A GUARD!
LISTEN TO ME, PLEASE... I AM A PRISONER LIKE YOURSELF... MY NAME IS... IS... EDMOND DANTES A FRENCH SEAMAN!
DO NOT LEAVE ME NOW, WHOEVER YOU ARE-- MY GOD, HAVE PITY ON ME!
DO NOT LET ME DIE ALONE IN DESPAIR!
WHO TALKS OF GOD AND DESPAIR IN THE SAME VOICE?
HMM...?! A HUMAN VOICE!
OH BLESS YOU SIR! YOURS IS THE FINEST HUMAN VOICE, SAVE MY JAILERS, I'VE HEARD IN YEARS...
BE PATIENT, DANTES--IT WILL TAKE TIME TO WORK THESE STONES FREE.
TIME IS ONE THING I HAVE A SURFEIT OF MY FRIEND.
I WILL DO WHAT I CAN TO HELP YOU FROM THIS SIDE!

THE WORK WAS ARDUOUS AND FRUSTRATING.. FOR WHILE THE MORTAR HOLDING THE WALL STONES IN PLACE WAS OLD, IT WAS ALSO STUBBORN..
...AND DANTES HAD TO WORK WITH ONE EAR LISTENING CONSTANTLY FOR HIS JAILER...
EVEN SO, THE JOB WAS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME.. AND DANTES, AS HE'D SAID, HAD A LOT OF THAT. FOR WHAT MATTERED A DAY-- OR EVEN A MONTH-- TO A MAN CONDEMNED FOR LIFE...
IN THE END, THE EFFORT PAID OFF...
...AND DANTES STEPPED THROUGH INTO THE ADJOINING CELL!
MY DEAR BOY, I GREET YOU WITH ALL MY HEART!
I AM THE ABBE FARIA.
OH GOD, IF THIS BE A DREAM--OR IF I'M MAD--I HOPE NEVER TO WAKE OR EVEN LESS TO BE CURED!
I AM NO DREAM, MY NEW-FOUND FRIEND. REST ASSURED OF THAT.

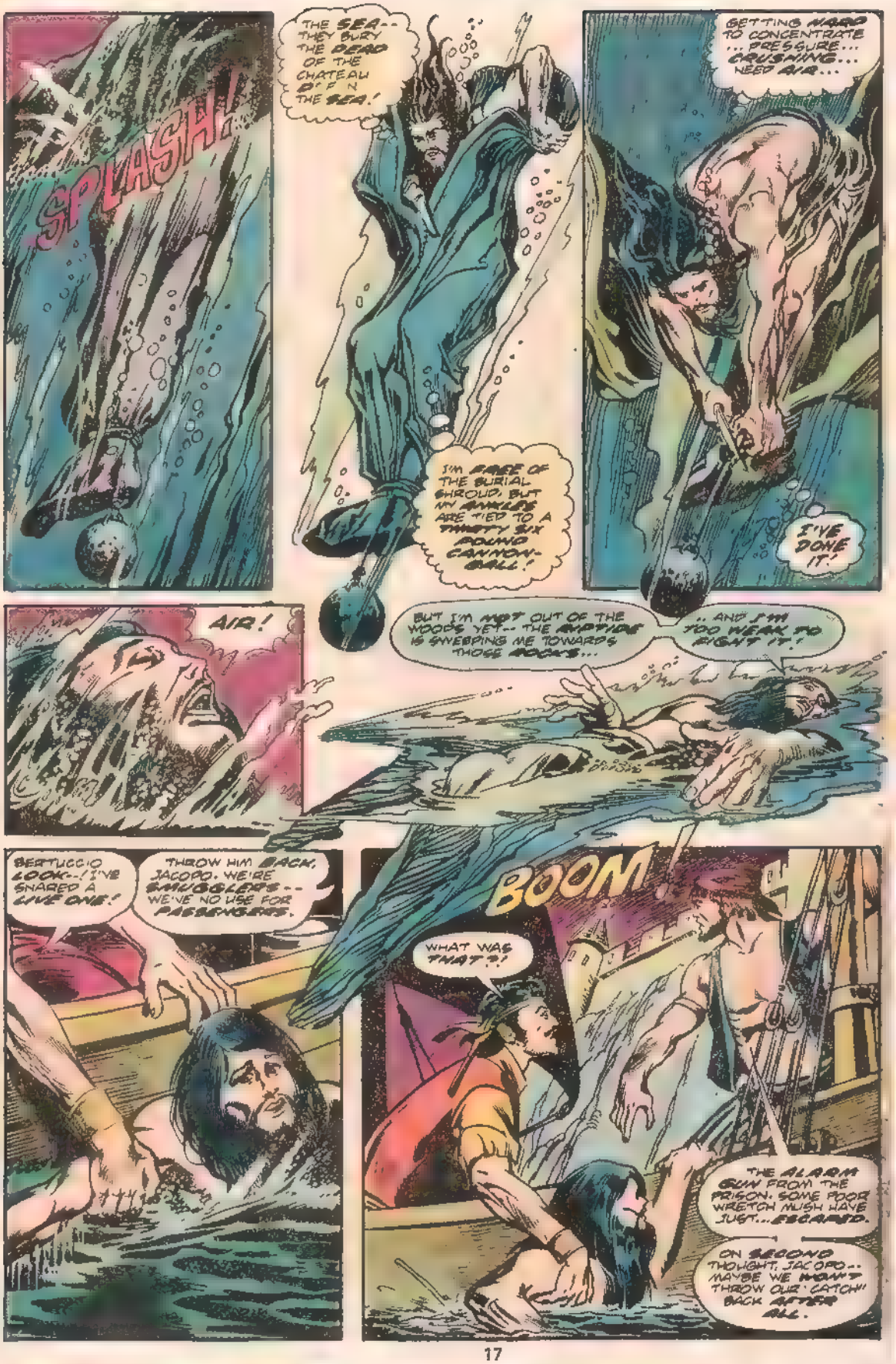
NOW, WE MUST TRULY YOUR CELL AND REMOVE OUR HANDIWORK LEST THE JAILERS DISCOVER OUR TUNNEL IN PASSING..
YOU'VE DONE WELL, EDMOND, DESPITE A LACK OF PROPER TOOLS.
"TOOLS"? WE'RE ALIVE, ABBE...?
SO? HOW SHOULD PRISON BE A BAR TO THE EXERCISE OF MAN'S NATURAL INTELLECT...?
I HAVE MADE MYSELF A BEECHWOOD CHISEL FROM ONE OF CLAMPS OF MY BEDSTEAD.. PUNY FINGERS AND A LEVEL.
"THIS" HOW YOU OCCUPY YOUR TIME?
GOOD HEAVENS, NO! I PASS MY DAYS IN STUDY, DRAWING ON WORKS I HAD MEMORIZED IN MY LIBRARY IN ROME.
I WRITE, AS WELL... AS ONE CAN A PARCHMENT MADE FROM THE LINEN OF MY SHIRT, A PEN MADE FROM FISH BONES AND INK MADE FROM SOOT.
COME, LET ME SHOW YOU.
AH, WE HAVE SOME HOURS YET... IT IS ONLY A QUARTER PAST TWELVE...
A CLOCK?
A SUNDIAL, REALLY CARVED ON MY WALL.
ALL MY TREASURES-- AS YOU MIGHT HAVE ALREADY GUESSED --ARE MEDICAL... BUT THIS IS MY MASTERWORK..
...A TREATISE ENTITLED, ON THE PRACTICABILITY OF FORMING ITALY INTO A GENERAL MONARCHY"
MAGNIFICENT.
THIS IS ONLY THE BEGINNING, MY FRIEND. I HAVE MANY MORE WONDERS TO SHOW YOU.

LATER.
SO TELL ME EDMOND, HOW CAME YOU TO THIS PLACE?
TRULY, I DO NOT KNOW... FOR I WAS INNOCENT OF ANY CRIME. THE PROSECUTOR HUGE... TOLD ME SO D'KING OUR INTERVIEW.
YET YOU ARE HERE.
ASSUMING YOU ARE THE VICTIM OF A PLOT, WERE THERE ANY WHO ENVIED YOU OR STOOD TO GAIN BY YOUR MISFORTUNE?
NONE.
OH? YOU WERE TO BE NAMED CAPTAIN OF THE PHARAON--WERE THERE ANY WHO COVETED THE POST?
NO-- WAIT... THERE WAS... DANGLARS. WE'D HAD AN ARGUMENT DURING THE VOYAGE AND I'D CHALLENGED HIM-- BUT THE COWARD HAD REFUSED TO FIGHT.
AND NOW THAT I THINK OF IT, HE KNEW OF THE LETTER I WAS CARRYING...
EXCELLENT. WHAT ABOUT MERCEDES? HAD YOU ANY RIVALS FOR HER HAND...?
OH-- FERNAND MONDEGO...
DID THIS MONDEGO KNOW DANGLARS?
YES... THEY WERE... TALKING TOGETHER AT MY WEDDING PARTY.
BUT I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND-- WHY DIDN'T THE PROSECUTOR HELP ME?
WHY NOT, INDEED?
TO WHOM WAS THE LETTER ADDRESSED?
M. MORREL, NO. 13, RUE COQ-HERON, PARIS.
AND THE PROSECUTOR'S NAME?
DE VILLEFORT.
YOU WERE CONDEMNED BECAUSE THE BONAPARTIST NOIRTIER IS NONE OTHER THAT THE FATHER OF THE ROYAL ST DE VILLEFORT.
THAT'S IT-- THE KEY YOU'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR! DON'T YOU SEE, EDMOND--?

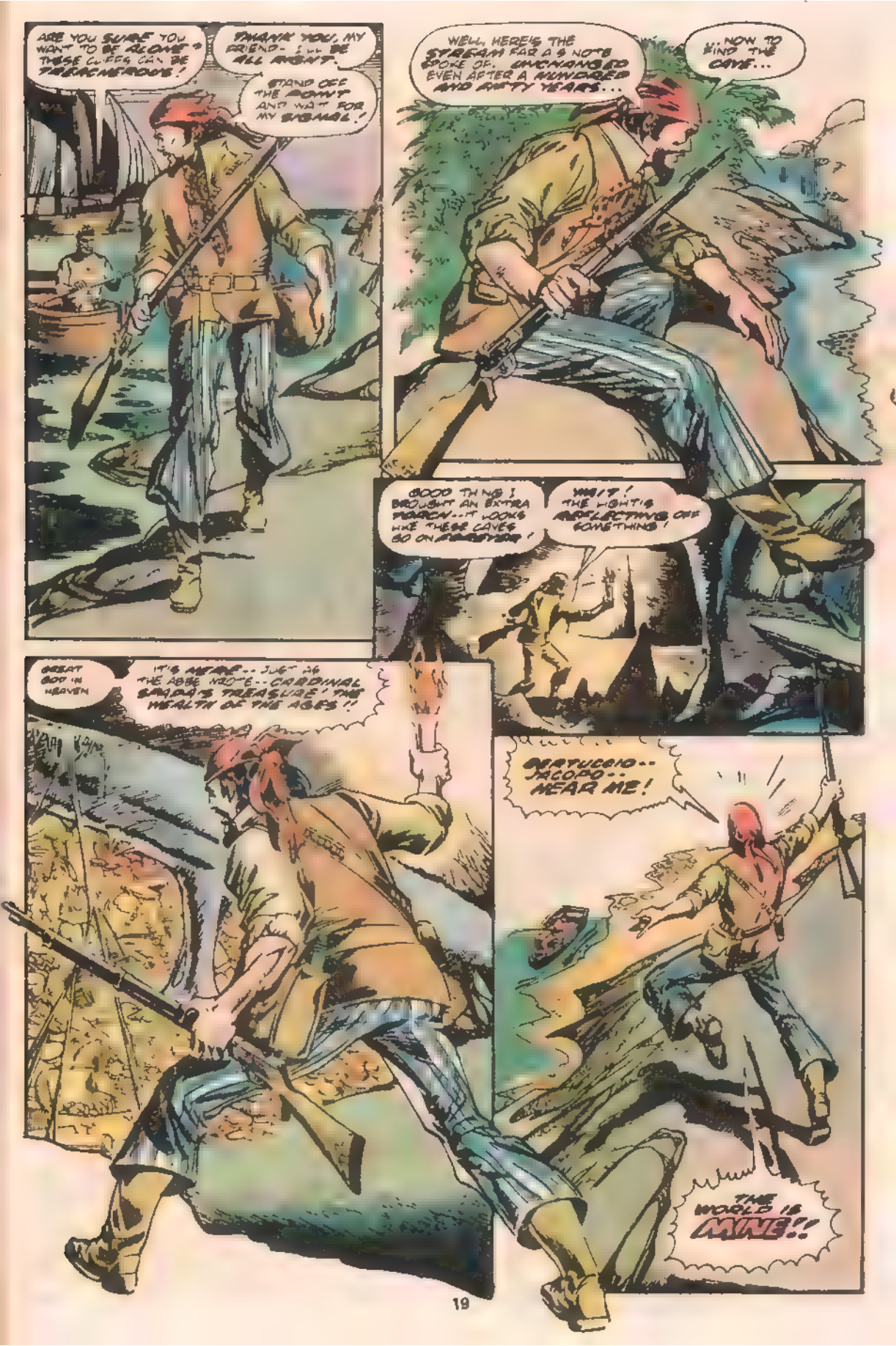

EDMOND.
LEAVE ME BE, ABBE FARIA, I BEG YOU.
I'M SORRY NOW I HELPED YOU, BECAUSE IT HAS AWAKENED A NEW EMOTION IN YOUR HEART--THAT OF VENGEANCE.
LET US TALK OF SOMETHING ELSE.
ABBE, WILL YOU TEACH ME SOME SMALL PART OF WHAT YOU KNOW...?
MY DEAR BOY, I CAN TEACH YOU ALL--MATHEMATICS, PHYSICS, HISTORY, LANGUAGES--AND IN LESS THAN TWO YEARS!
TRULY? IN SO SHORT A TIME?
THE PRINCIPLES, AT LEAST THOUGH CERTAINLY NOT THE APPLICATION.
PROVIDED, OF COURSE, YOU ARE WILLING TO LEARN, AND WILLING TO BANISH HATRED FROM YOUR HEART
I WILL... TRY, ABBE.
THAT IS ALL I ASK, MY BOY. WE WILL BEGIN TONIGHT.
WITHIN A YEAR, DANTES WAS A NEW MAN.. AND WITHIN TWO HE HAD OUTSTRIPPED HIS TEACHER...
THEY BEGAN A GREEN TUNNEL AND COMPLETED IT AFTER FIFTEEN MONTHS WORK--ONLY A FEW HOURS HARD DIGGING SEPARATED THEM FROM THE OUTER WALL OF THE FORTRESS
... AND FREEDOM!

FAINTLY... THE NIGHT, MY FRIEND, THE SKY...
ABBE WHAT'S WRONG?
MY HEART... MY EDMOND. THE PAIN...
ARRGGH!
TELL ME WHAT TO DO. FAR A... I SEE OF...
NO... TIME... I'M DYING... EDMOND...
NO!
LISTEN TO ME...!
PARCHMENT... HIDDEN IN HOLLOW OF MY BED-STEAD. GET IT- AND HURRY, EDMOND...!
I HAVE IT!
I HAVE BURIED IN A SPOT WHICH HE KNOWS FROM HAVING VISITED IT WITH ME, IN OTHER WORDS IN THE CAVES OF MONTE CRISTO INLET, ALL MY PROPERTY IN GOLD BULLION AND COIN AND JEWELS, PRECIOUS STONES AND GEMS.
25TH APRIL 1498
Cesare Spada
TREASURE OF SPADA'S... I WAS CARDINAL SPADA'S SECRETARY IN ROME.. WAS LEAVING TO FIND IT WHEN... ARRESTED...
...ANYTOLD WEALTH... WHICH I NOW BEQUEATH TO... YOU, MY SON...
ALL I ASK IS THAT YOU USE THE FORTUNE FOR... GOOD...
...SO PROUD OF YOU, EDMOND... SO... PROUD...
YOU WON'T DIE, FARIA... I WON'T LET YOU!

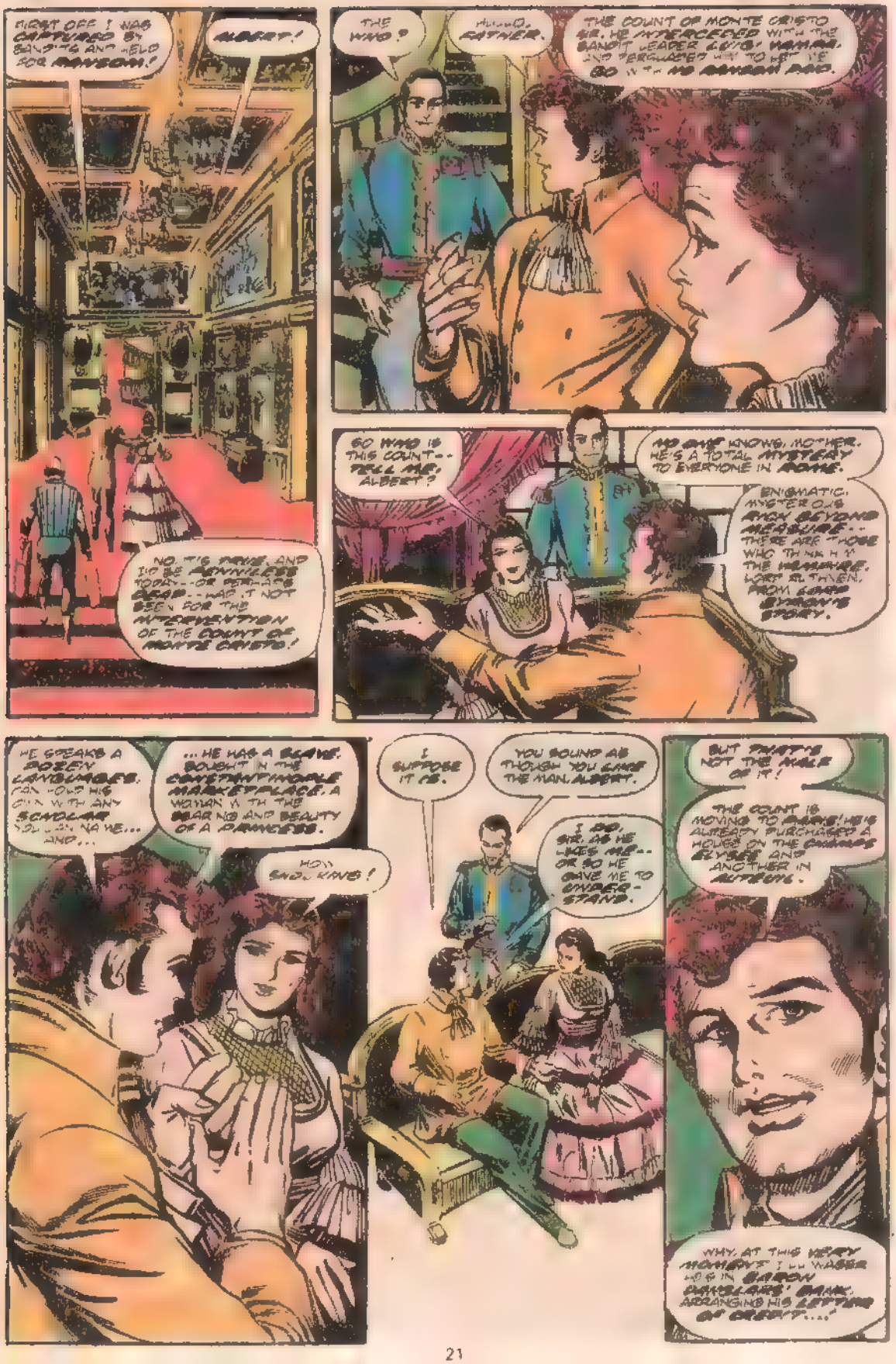
TRUE ENOUGH--THE OLD FOOL'S DEAD...AND ALL HIS DREAMS OF REALTY HAVE DIED WITH HIM.
WILL HE BE BURIED TONIGHT?
OF COURSE, SIR, ABOUT ELEVEN O'CLOCK, I THINK.
VERY WELL. WILL YOU WATCH THE CORPSE?
WHY BOTHER, SIR--HE'S NOT GOING ANYWHERE. 'TIS ENOUGH THAT WE'VE SEWN HIM INTO HIS SHROUD. BESIDES, THE CELL DOOR'S LOCKED.
DEAR FRIEND, YOUR SOUL IS ARE--I PRAY IT WILL NOT CONDEMN ME FOR WHAT I AM ABOUT TO DO.
I'LL EXCHANGE PLACES WITH ABBE FARIA'S CORPSE AND THEN--ONCE I AM BURIED I'LL MY WAY OUT OF THE GRAVE...
FASTER, DANTES, FASTER! THE GUARDS WILL BE RETURNING ANY MINUTE!
HE'S HEAVY ENOUGH FOR A THIN OLD MAN.
THEY SAY EVERY YEAR ADDS HALF-A-POUND TO THE WEIGHT OF THE BONES.
BAD WEATHER. LOOKS LIKE--NOT A PLEASANT NIGHT FOR A SWIM. I'LL WAGER.
WHY, YES. THE PRIEST RUNS A CHANCE OF BEING DROWNED.
NAY.
SPLT
BRRMM
AND TRY NOT TO HIT THE ROCKS THIS TIME, EH? WE'RE SUPPOSED TO TOSS THE STIFFS INTO THE SEA.
ONE--TWO--THREE--
AND AWAY!!


SPLASH!
THE SEA-- THEY BURY THE DEAD OF THE CHATEAU D'IF IN THE SEA!
I'M FREE OF THE BURIAL SHROUD, BUT MY ANKLES ARE TIED TO A THIRTY SIX POUND CANNON-BALL!
GETTING HARD TO CONCENTRATE ... PRESSURE... CRUSHING... NEED AIR...
I'VE DONE IT!
AIR!
BUT I'M NOT OUT OF THE WOODS YET-- THE CAPTAIN IS SWEEPING ME TOWARDS THOSE ROCKS...
.. AND I'M TOO WEAK TO FIGHT IT!
BERTUCCIO LOOK--! I'VE SNARED A LIVE ONE!
THROW HIM BACK, JACOPO. WE'RE SMUGGLERS -- WE'VE NO USE FOR PASSENGERS.
BOOM!
WHAT WAS THAT?!
THE ALARM GUN FROM THE PRISON. SOME POOR WRETCH MUSH HAVE JUST... ESCAPED.
ON SECOND THOUGHT, JACOPO... MAYBE WE WON'T THROW OUR CATCH BACK AFTER ALL.

TIME PASSED, THE SEA--AND HIS NEW FOUND COMPANIONS--HELPED DANTES RESTORE HIMSELF ONCE MORE.
WE'VE DONE WELL BY EACH OTHER THESE PAST MONTHS SINCE WE FISHED YOU OUT OF THE SEA.
MY NAMELESS FRIEND YOU'VE BROUGHT US LUCK.
MY PLEASURE, BERTUCCIO--HOW LONG--MONTE CRISTO?
NOT LONG. WHAT DAHMS SO--TO THE BOP-ARSONEN PLACE ANYWAY...?
OH BY THE WAY, JACOPO WAS IN MARSEILLES--HE'S FOUND OUT ABOUT MORE PEOPLE TO...NEVERMIND.
WHAT...?! WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME?! JACOPO!!
I DIDN'T THINK IT WAS THAT IMPORTANT.
...THE MAN DANGLARS IS NOW BARON DANGLARS OWNER OF ONE OF THE RICHEST BANKS IN PARIS. DE VILLEFORT IS A COUNT AND ATTORNEY-GENERAL TO BOOT.
MONDEGO IS NOW THE COUNT DE MORCERF A LIEUTENANT-GENERAL IN THE ARMY AND A COMMANDER OF THE LEGION OF HONOR.
AND MY PA--THE OLD MAN! DANTES?
DEAD OF STARVATION. MY FRIEND. IT'S SAID HIS MONEY AND VALUABLES WERE STOLEN BY HIS NEIGHBOR, CADEROUSSE.
AND...MERCEDES?
SHE IS THE COUNTESS DE MORCERF. AND HAS BORNE THE COUNT A FINE, STRONG SON NOW OF FOURTEEN YEARS
OH GOD, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER HAD I DIED IN EARLIER PLACE THAN TO HAVE LEARNED ALL THIS...
AHOY, BELOW! IN CASE ANYONE'S INTERESTED...
...WE'VE ARRIVED AT MONTE CRISTO!

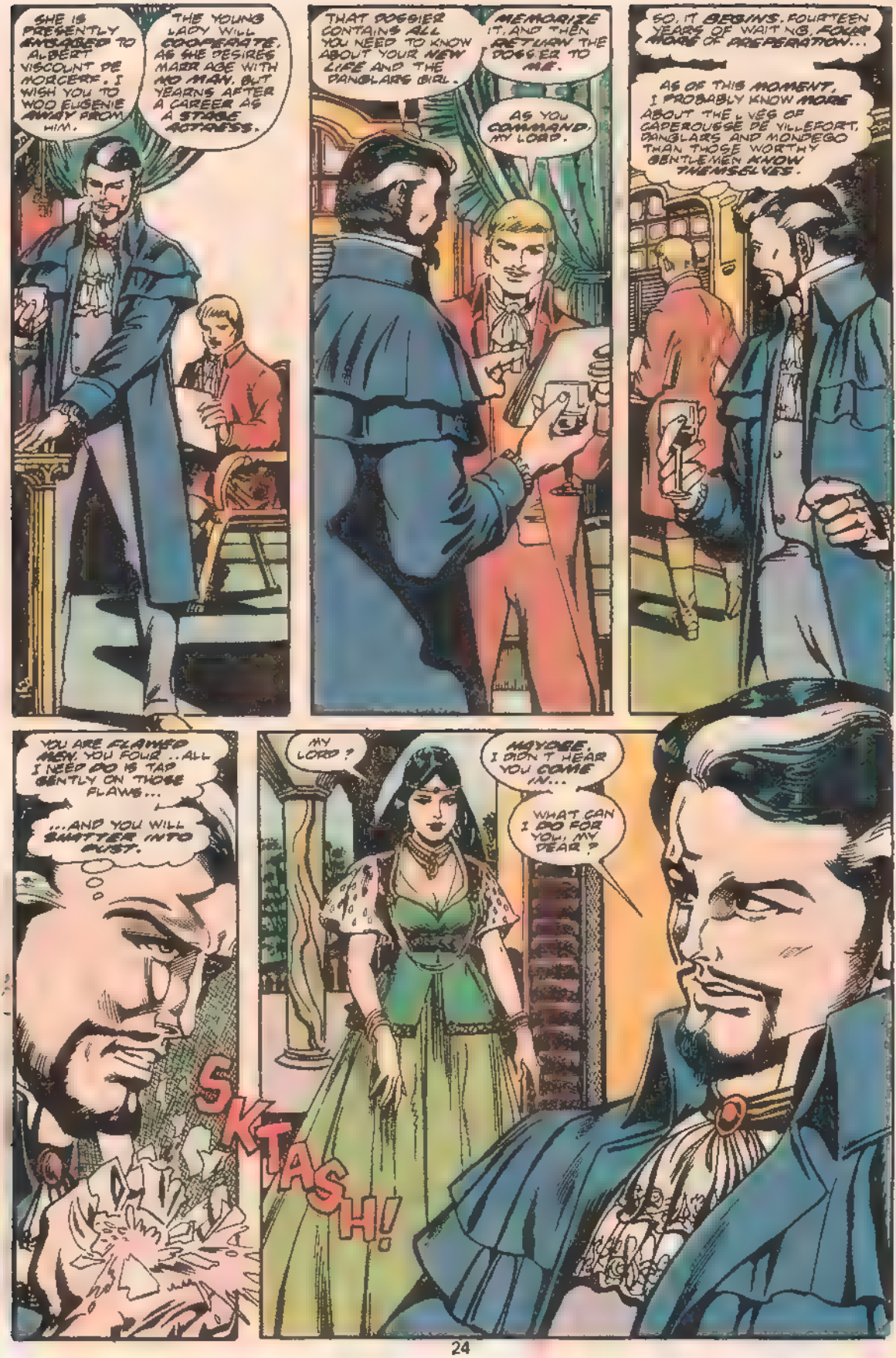

ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT TO BE ALONE? THESE CLIFFS CAN BE TREACHEROUS!
THANK YOU, MY FRIEND- I'LL BE ALL RIGHT.
STAND OFF THE POINT AND WAIT FOR MY SIGNAL!
WELL, HERE'S THE STREAM FAR AS NOTE SPOKE OF. UNCHANGED EVEN AFTER A HUNDRED AND FIFTY YEARS...
NOW TO MIND THE CAVE...
GOOD THING I BROUGHT AN EXTRA TORCH--IT LOOKS LIKE THESE CAVES GO ON FOREVER!
WAIT! THE LIGHT'S REFLECTING OFF SOMETHING!
GREAT GOD IN HEAVEN
IT'S ALL HERE... JUST AS THE ABBE NOTE--CARDINAL SPADA'S TREASURE! THE WEALTH OF THE AGES!!
MATTUCCIO... JACOPO... HEAR ME!
THE WORLD IS MINE!!

PART 3:
THE MAN OF MYSTERY!
PARIS, IN THE SPRING OF 1819--AT THE PARIS MANSION OF ARMAND COUNT DE MORCERF...
MOTHER, I'M HOME!
OH, ALBERT, MY DEAR SON--IT'S SO GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN!
DID YOU SPEND A PLEASANT NEW YEAR'S IN ROME?
I HAD ADVENTURE AFTER ADVENTURE, MOTHER--JUST WAIT TILL I TELL YOU ABOUT THEM! THEY'LL MAKE YOUR BLOOD RUN COLD!


FIRST OFF I WAS CAPTURED BY BANDITS AND HELD FOR RANSOM!
ALBERT!
THE WHO?
HUMPH. FATHER.
THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO IS HE. HE INTERCEDED WITH THE BANDIT LEADER LUIGI VAMPA, AND NEGOTIATED MY TO BE SET FREE. SO WITH NO RANSOM PAID.
NO, IT'S TRUE, AND I'D BE ARMLESS TODAY--OR PERHAPS DEAD--HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR THE INTERVENTION OF THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO!
SO WHO IS THIS COUNT-- TELL ME, ALBERT?
NO ONE KNOWS, MOTHER. HE'S A TOTAL MYSTERY TO EVERYONE IN ROME.
ENIGMATIC, MYSTERIOUS BEYOND MEASURE... THERE ARE THOSE WHO THINK HE IS THE WANDERER, LORD RUTHVEN, FROM LORD BYRON'S STORY.
HE SPEAKS A DOZEN LANGUAGES, CAN HOLD HIS OWN WITH ANY SCHOLAR YOU'VE EVER MET... AND...
...HE HAS A SLAVE, BOUGHT IN THE CONSTANTINOPLE MARKETPLACE, A WOMAN WITH THE GRACE AND BEAUTY OF A PRINCESS.
HOW SHOCKING!
I SUPPOSE IT IS.
YOU SOUND AS THOUGH YOU LIKE THE MAN, ALBERT.
I DO, SIR. AS HE LIKES ME... OR SO HE GAVE ME TO UNDERSTAND.
BUT THAT'S NOT THE HALF OF IT!
THE COUNT IS MOVING TO PARIS! HE'S ALREADY PURCHASED A HOUSE ON THE CHAMPS ELYSEE AND ANOTHER IN AUTEUIL.
WHY, AT THIS VERY MOMENT I'M WAGER HE'S IN BARON ROTHSCHILD'S BANK, ARRANGING HIS LETTERS OF CREDIT...."

M. LE COMTE DE MONTE-CRISTO!
MY DEAR COUNT, YOU DO HONOR TO MY BANK.
THANK YOU, BARON.
I ASSUME YOU'VE RECEIVED MY LETTER OF CREDIT FROM THOMPSON AND FRENCH IN ROME.
I... AH... HAVE, COUNT, BUT THERE SEEMS TO BE SOME CONFUSION. THE LETTER CALLS FOR UNLIMITED CREDIT.
SO? IS THE WORD "UNLIMITED" UNKNOWN IN THE FRENCH VOCABULARY?
BUT, COUNT, HOW MUCH CAPITAL DID YOU HAVE IN MIND? A MILLION?
MY DEAR DANGLARS, A MILLION IS A TRIFLING SUM, ONE I CARRY IN MY POCKET-BOOK OR CHEQUING CASE.
NOW MY BANKERS HAVE ALREADY CONTACTED M. LAFITTE AND BARON DE ROTHSCHILD -- AND BOTH THOSE BANKING HOUSE HAVE GRANTED ME UNLIMITED CREDIT.
IF THE HOUSE OF DANGLARS IS NOT WILLING TO DO THE SAME, I SHALL SIMPLY TAKE MY BUSINESS SOMEWHERE ELSE.
LAFITTE... AND ROTHCHILD...?
AH, NO... NEED TO DO THAT, MY DEAR COUNT. THE HOUSE OF DANGLARS WILL BE PLEASED TO HONOR YOUR LETTER OF CREDIT.
HOW MUCH WOULD YOU LIKE TO BEGIN WITH...?
SIX MILLION SHOULD SUFFICE FOR THE AWFUL YEAR.

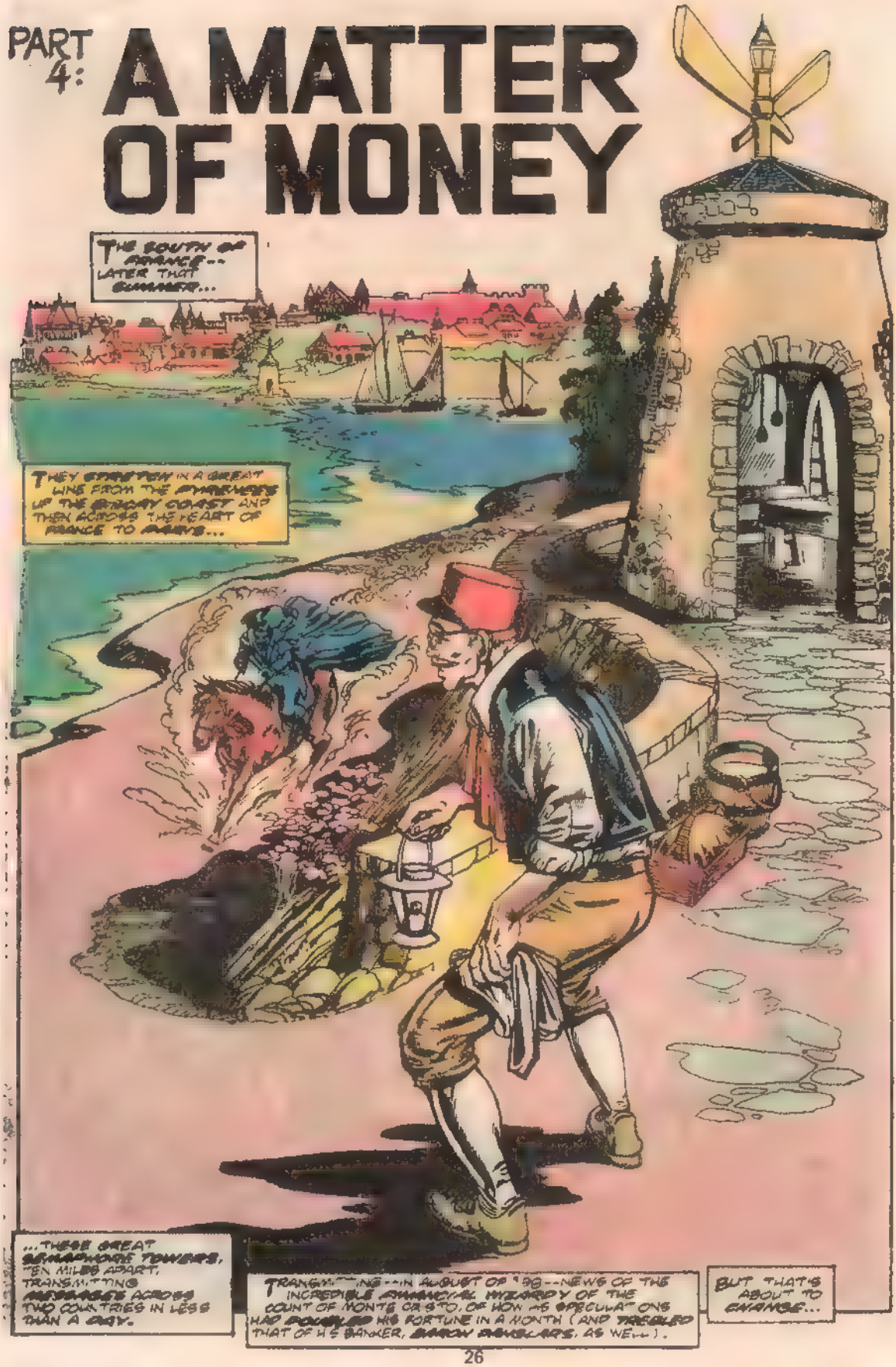
"...HAVE THE FUNDS DELIVERED TO MY HOUSE TOMORROW!"
BERTUCCIO--IS THE MAN I SENT FOR HERE?
IN YOUR STUDY M. LE COMTE.
YOU ARE BENEDETTO GASPARI?
I... AM, SIGNOR
NO LONGER. HENCEFORTH YOU ARE COUNT ANDREA CAVALCANTI DESCENDANT OF THE CAVALCANTI WHOSE NAMES ARE INSCRIBED IN THE GOLDEN BOOK OF THE FLORENCE.
OH FORTUNATE ME.
YOUR FAMILY--DESPITE RECENT MISFORTUNES--IS STILL RICH, WITH AN INCOME UPWARDS OF HALF A MILLION.
YOU HAVE COME TO PARIS TO FURTHER YOUR EDUCATION, AND YOUR FATHER HAS ALLOWED YOU AN ANNUAL INCOME OF 50,000 LIVRES.
OH GENEROUS FATHER!
YOU WILL TAKE APARTMENTS IN A RESPECTABLE HOTEL, AND LIVE WELL UP TO YOUR MEANS.
BUY YOUR SUITS AT DUN OR VERONIQUE--THE LEGS PRETENTIOUS THE BETTER, AS YOU ARE A RICH MAN AND SHOULD LOOK THE PART--
IF YOU WISH HORSES GET THEM OF DEVERGEUX; IF A PHAETON, GO TO BAPTISTE FOR IT. UNDERSTOOD?
YES. BUT WHY THIS... MASQUERADE?
THAT IS MY AFFAIR.
I'VE BEEN TOLD THAT, TOO, COUNT.
GOOD. I WISH A LADY ROMANCED... THIS LADY, CAVALCANTI...
MME. EUGENIE DANGLARS.
I WILL INTRODUCE YOU TO SOCIETY--THE RIGHT PLACES, THE RIGHT PEOPLE--I'M TOLD YOU HAVE A... WAY WITH THE LADIES..

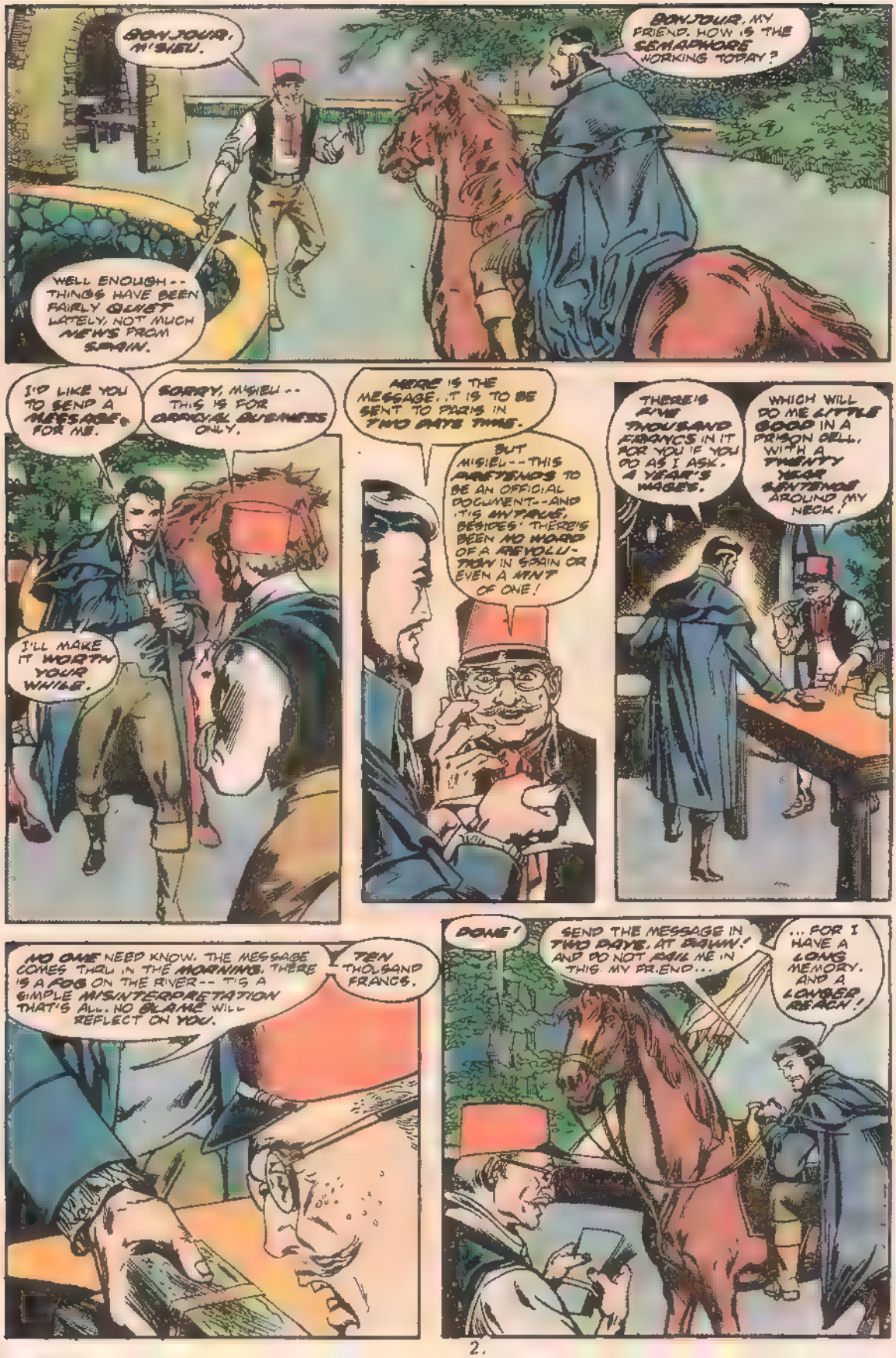

SHE IS PRESENTLY ENGAGED TO ALBERT VISCOUNT DE MORCERF. I WISH YOU TO WOO EUGENIE AWAY FROM HIM.
THE YOUNG LADY WILL COOPERATE, AS SHE DESIRES MARRIAGE WITH NO MAN, BUT YEARNS AFTER A CAREER AS A STAGE ACTRESS.
THAT DOSSIER CONTAINS ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR NEW LIFE AND THE DANGLARS GIRL.
MEMORIZE IT, AND THEN RETURN THE DOSSIER TO ME.
AS YOU COMMAND, MY LORD.
SO, IT BEGINS. FOURTEEN YEARS OF WAITING, FOUR MORE OF PREPERATION...
AS OF THIS MOMENT, I PROBABLY KNOW MORE ABOUT THE LIVES OF CAPEROUGE DE VILLEFORT, DANGLARS AND MONDEGO THAN THOSE WORTHY GENTLEMEN KNOW THEMSELVES.
YOU ARE FLAWED MEN. YOU FOUR. ALL I NEED DO IS TAP GENTLY ON THOSE FLAWS...
...AND YOU WILL SHATTER INTO DUST.
MY LORD?
MAYDEE, I DIDN'T HEAR YOU COME IN...
WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU, MY DEAR?
SKTASH!

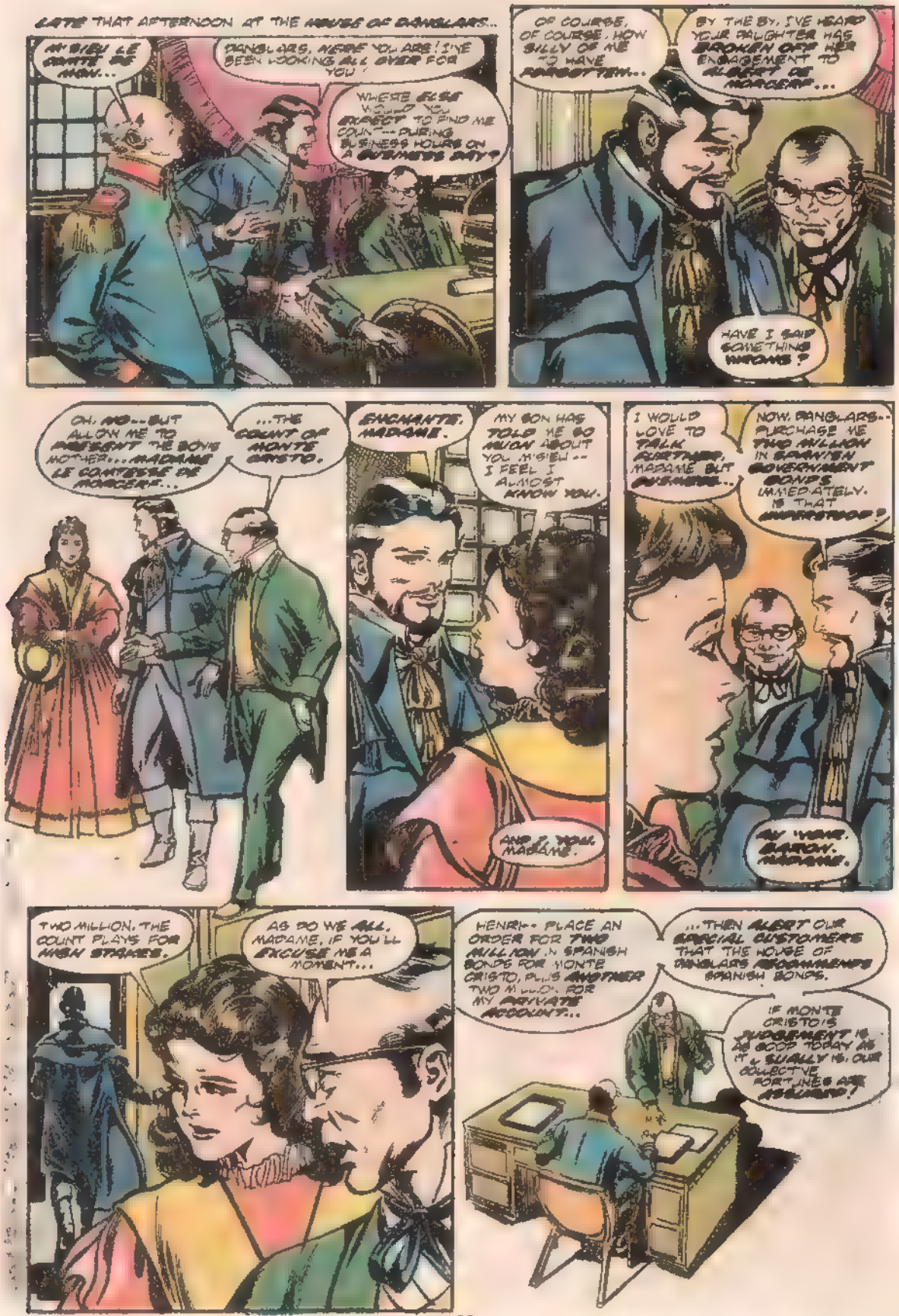
MY LORD, DO NOT DO THIS THING. IT... HURTS ME TO SEE YOU SO TORMENTED, AND WHEN I HEAR THE HATRED IN YOUR VOICE..
YOU'RE TWENTY YEARS TOO LATE, CHILD.
I COULD NO MORE STOP MYSELF NOW THAN THE EARTH COULD STOP ITS ROTATION AROUND THE SUN.
I AM AN INSTRUMENT OF THE LORD'S VENGEANCE HAYDEE-- DO YOU UNDERSTAND THAT?
NO, MY LORD.
THESE ARE EVIL MEN CHILD ALL DESERVING OF THEIR FATES...
THEY HAVE ALL LIED, SCHEMED, STOLEN, BETRAYED TO ACHIEVE THEIR PRESENT POSITIONS. I AM MERELY BALANCING THE SCALES..
...PAYING DEBTS THAT ARE LONG OVERDUE.
BUT WILL THAT NOT MAKE YOU NO BETTER THAN THESE MEN YOU HATE SO MUCH?
PERHAPS. BUT TELL ME TRULY, HAYDEE--ONE OF THESE MEN BETRAYED AND KILLED YOUR PARENTS; HE SOLD YOU INTO SLAVERY.
WOULD YOU SEE THAT MAN LIVE HIS LIFE UNPUNISHED?
N-NO--MY LORD...
WE MUST ALL ANSWER TO OUR PERSONAL DEMONS, HAYDEE...
...AND MINE IS THAT--IF I AM TO HAVE MY VENGEANCE--
--I MUST DESTROY THE WOMAN I ONCE LOVED MORE THAN LIFE ITSELF.

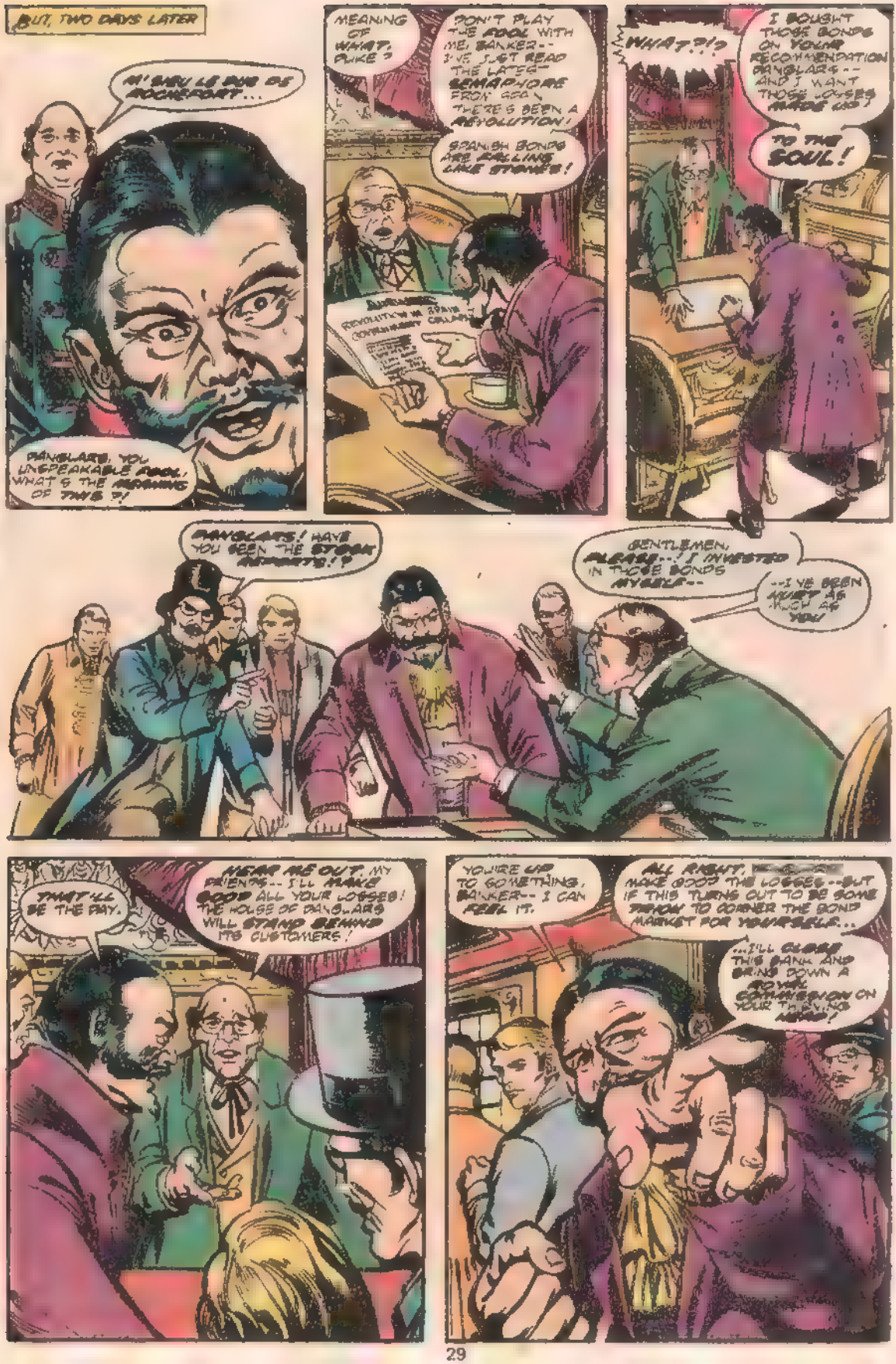
PART 4:

A MATTER OF MONEY

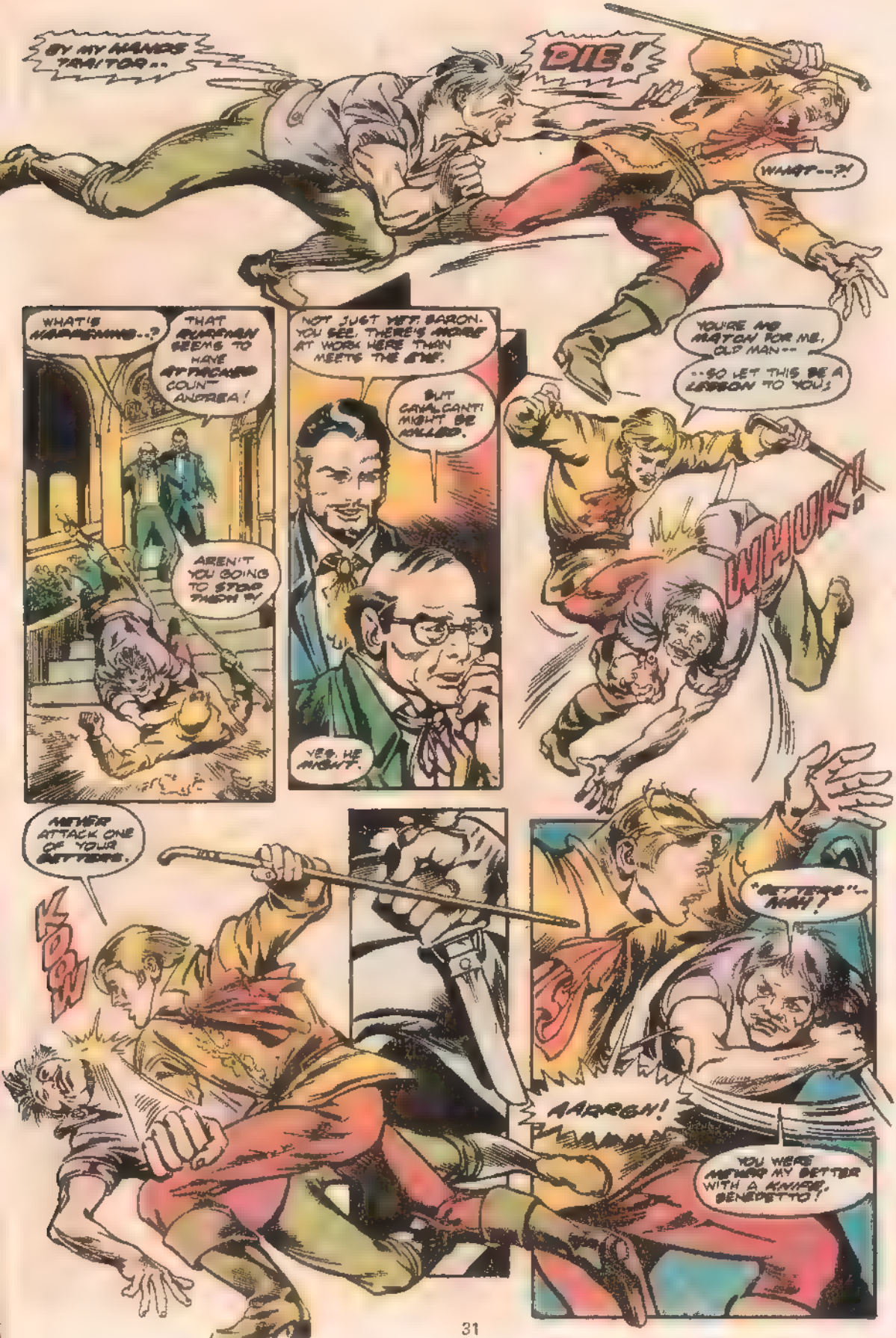

THE SOUTH OF FRANCE... LATER THAT SUMMER...
THEY STRETCH IN A GREAT LINE FROM THE SHIPYARDS UP THE BISCAY COAST AND THEN ACROSS THE HEART OF FRANCE TO PARIS...
...THESE GREAT SEMAPHORE TOWERS, TEN MILES APART, TRANSMITTING MESSAGES ACROSS TWO COUNTRIES IN LESS THAN A DAY.
TRANSMITTING--IN AUGUST OF '98--NEWS OF THE INCREDIBLE FINANCIAL WIZARDRY OF THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO, OF HOW AS SPECULATIONS HAD DOUBLED HIS FORTUNE IN A MONTH (AND TREBLED THAT OF HIS BANKER, BARON ROTHSCHILD, AS WELL).
BUT THAT'S ABOUT TO CHANGE...


BONJOUR, M'SIEU.
BONJOUR, MY FRIEND. HOW IS THE SEMAPHORE WORKING TODAY?
WELL ENOUGH -- THINGS HAVE BEEN FAIRLY QUIET LATELY, NOT MUCH NEWS FROM SPAIN.
I'D LIKE YOU TO SEND A MESSAGE FOR ME.
SORRY, M'SIEU -- THIS IS FOR OFFICIAL BUSINESS ONLY.
I'LL MAKE IT WORTH YOUR WHILE.
HERE IS THE MESSAGE. IT IS TO BE SENT TO PARIS IN TWO DAYS TIME.
BUT M'SIEU -- THIS PRETENDS TO BE AN OFFICIAL DOCUMENT -- AND IT'S UNTRUE. BESIDES, THERE'S BEEN NO WORD OF A REVOLUTION IN SPAIN OR EVEN A HINT OF ONE!
THERE'S FIVE THOUSAND FRANCS IN IT FOR YOU IF YOU DO AS I ASK. A YEAR'S WAGES.
WHICH WILL DO ME LITTLE GOOD IN A PRISON CELL, WITH A TWENTY YEAR SENTENCE AROUND MY NECK!
NO ONE NEED KNOW. THE MESSAGE COMES THRU IN THE MORNING. THERE IS A FOG ON THE RIVER -- IT'S A SIMPLE MISINTERPRETATION THAT'S ALL. NO BLAME WILL REFLECT ON YOU.
TEN THOUSAND FRANCS.
DONE!
SEND THE MESSAGE IN TWO DAYS, AT DAWN! AND DO NOT FAIL ME IN THIS MY FRIEND...
... FOR I HAVE A LONG MEMORY. AND A LONGER REACH!

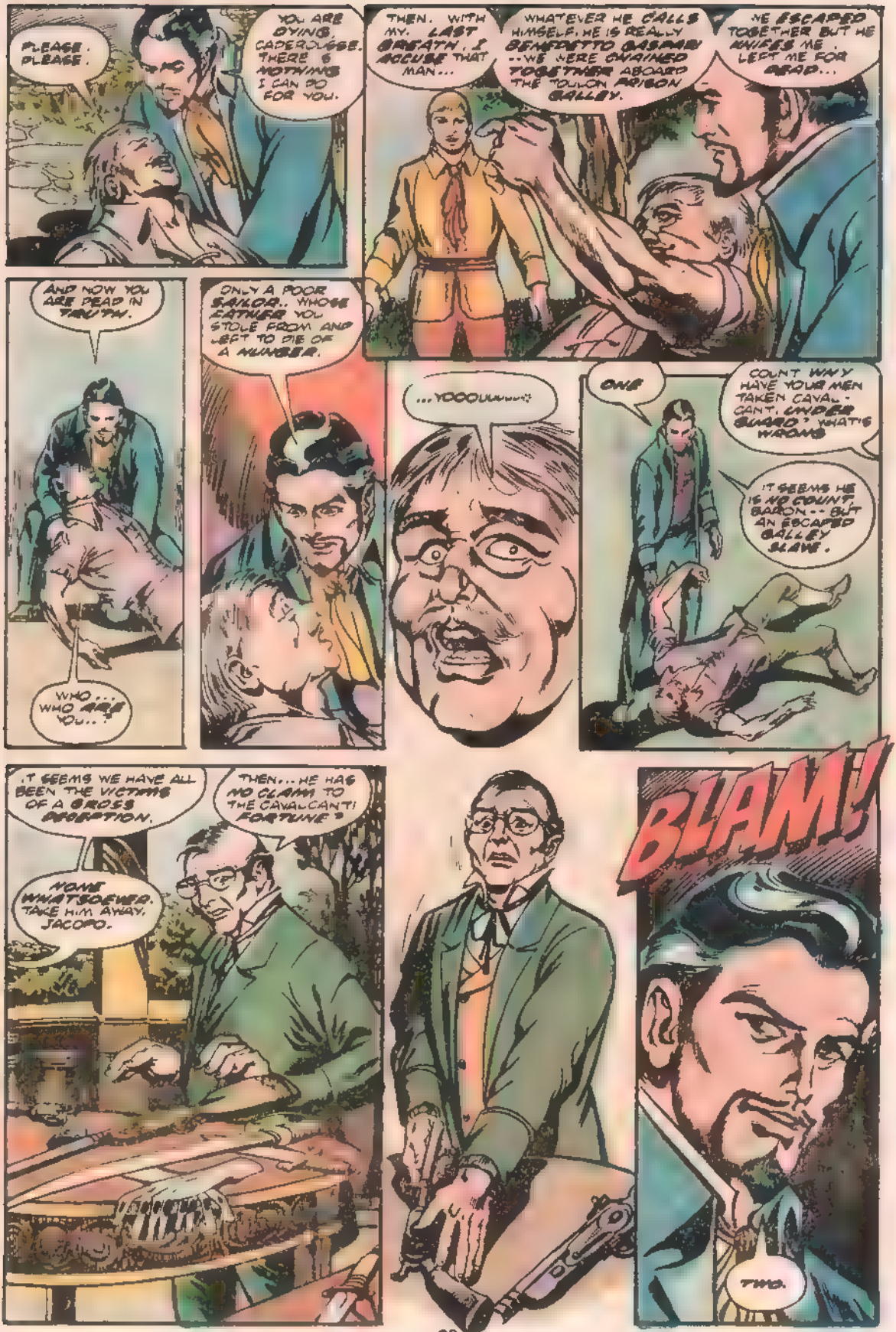

LATE THAT AFTERNOON AT THE HOUSE OF DANGLARS..
AH BIEN LE COMTE DE MORCERF...
DANGLARS, HERE YOU ARE! I'VE BEEN LOOKING ALL OVER FOR YOU!
WHERE ELSE WOULD YOU EXPECT TO FIND ME DURING BUSINESS HOURS ON A BUSINESS DAY?
OF COURSE, OF COURSE. HOW SILLY OF ME TO HAVE FORGOTTEN...
BY THE BY, I'VE HEARD YOUR DAUGHTER HAS BROKEN OFF HER ENGAGEMENT TO ALBERT DE MORCERF...
HAVE I SAID SOMETHING WRONG?
OH, NO...BUT ALLOW ME TO PRESENT THE BOY'S MOTHER...MADAME LE COMTESSE DE MORCERF...
...THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO.
ENCHANTE, MADAME.
MY SON HAS TOLD ME SO MUCH ABOUT YOU, M'SIEU -- I FEEL I ALMOST KNOW YOU.
AND I, YOU, MADAME.
I WOULD LOVE TO TALK FURTHER, MADAME BUT AHEM...
NOW, DANGLARS.. PURCHASE ME TWO MILLION IN SPANISH GOVERNMENT BONDS IMMEDIATELY. IS THAT SATISFACTORY?
AU REVOIR, BARON, MADAME.
TWO MILLION. THE COUNT PLAYS FOR HIGH STAKES.
AS DO WE ALL, MADAME, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME A MOMENT...
HENRI-- PLACE AN ORDER FOR TWO MILLION IN SPANISH BONDS FOR MONTE CRISTO, PLUS ANOTHER TWO M...O... FOR MY PRIVATE ACCOUNT...
...THEN ALERT OUR FINANCIAL CUSTOMERS THAT THE HOUSE OF DANGLARS RECOMMENDS SPANISH BONDS.
IF MONTE CRISTO'S JUDGEMENT IS AS GOOD TODAY AS IT USUALLY IS, OUR COLLECTIVE FORTUNES ARE ASSURED!


BUT, TWO DAYS LATER
M'SIEU LE DUC DE ROCHEFORT...
PANGLARS, YOU UNSPEAKABLE FOOL, WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS?!
MEANING OF WHAT, DUKE?
DON'T PLAY THE FOOL WITH ME, BANKER-- I'VE JUST READ THE LATEST REMAPHORE FROM AGO, THERE'S BEEN A REVOLUTION!
SPANISH BONDS ARE FALLING LIKE STONES!
REVOLUTION IN SPAIN - CARLIST
WHAT?!?
I BOUGHT THOSE BONDS ON YOUR RECOMMENDATION PANGLARS-- AND I WANT THOSE LOSSES MADE GOOD!
TO THE SOUL!
PANGLARS! HAVE YOU SEEN THE STOCK REPORTS?!
GENTLEMEN, PLEASE...I INVESTED IN THOSE BONDS MYSELF--
--I'VE BEEN HURT AS MUCH AS YOU!
THAT'LL BE THE DAY.
HEAR ME OUT, MY FRIENDS-- I'LL MAKE GOOD ALL YOUR LOSSES! THE HOUSE OF PANGLARS WILL STAND BEHIND ITS CUSTOMERS!
YOU'RE UP TO SOMETHING, BANKER-- I CAN FEEL IT.
ALL RIGHT, [redacted] MAKE GOOD THE LOSSES--BUT IF THIS TURNS OUT TO BE SOME TRICK TO CORNER THE BOND MARKET FOR YOURSELF...
...I'LL CLOSE THIS BANK AND BRING DOWN A ROYAL COMMISSION ON YOUR THIEVING HEAD!

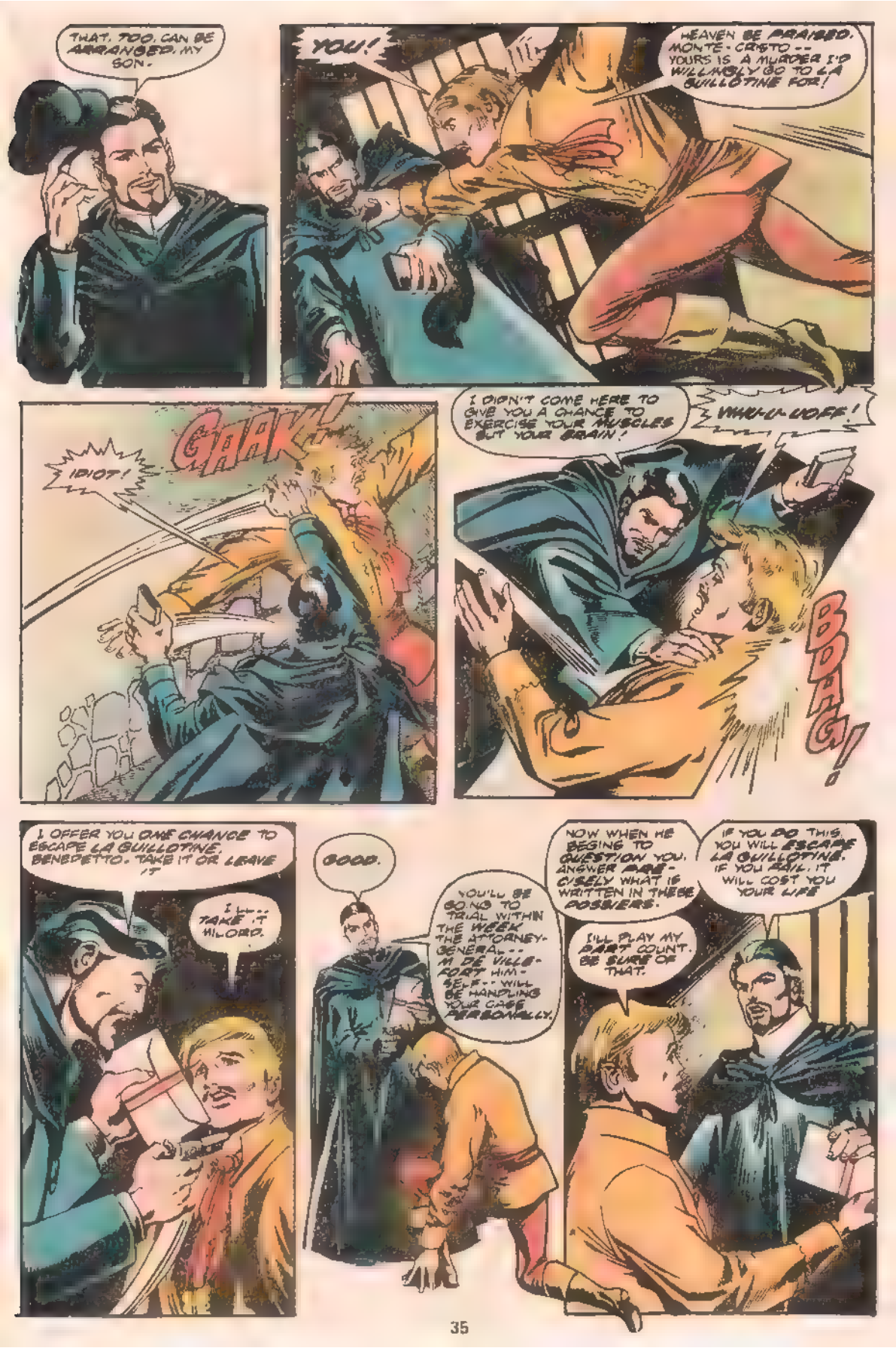
RUINED.
IF THE BONDS STAY DOWN, I'LL GO BANKRUPT MAKING UP THE LOSSES -- BUT IF THE STOCKS GO UP...
...MY BANK WILL BE CLOSED.
I'VE ONLY ONE CHANCE -- TO SIGN THE MARRIAGE CONTRACT BETWEEN EUGENIE AND ANDREA CAVALCANTI...
WITH ACCESS TO THE CAVALCANTI FORTUNE, I CAN BID PARIS A FOND FAREWELL.
EXILE ISN'T A PLEASANT PROSPECT, BUT IT'S A FAR BETTER ONE THAN A PRISON SENTENCE FOR FRAUD.
BANDITS -- WHAT A NICE SURPRISE! WHAT ARE YOU DOING AWAY FROM YOUR PRECIOUS BANK ON A BUSINESS DAY?
I... AH... I'VE BEEN THINKING. COUNT THAT IT'S TIME I SETTLED THE MATTER OF EUGENIE'S MARRIAGE.
IF COUNT ANDREA IS AGREEABLE I'D LIKE TO FINALIZE THE CONTRACT TODAY.
I DON'T SEE WHY NOT. ANDREA IS IN THE GALLERY, PRACTICING HIS FENCING.
I'LL HAVE BERTUCCIO SUMMON HIM.
IS ALL IN READINESS, BERTUCCIO?
IT IS, MY LORD. THE MAN CADEROUSSE IS IN THE COURT. COUNT ANDREA MUST PASS HIM ON HIS WAY HERE...
AND, INDEED, AT THAT VERY MOMENT...
OUT OF MY WAY.
YOUR PARDON, MY LORD. I --
YOU --!!
BENEDETTO, YOU BUTCHER --
...I'VE FOUND YOU AT LAST!!


BY MY HANDS TRAITOR..
DIE!
WHAT--?!
YOU'RE NO MATCH FOR ME, OLD MAN--
..SO LET THIS BE A LESSON TO YOU!
WHUK!
WHAT'S HAPPENING..?
THAT GUARDIAN SEEMS TO HAVE ATTACKED COUNT ANDREA!
AREN'T YOU GOING TO STOP THEM?!
NOT JUST YET! BARON. YOU SEE, THERE'S MORE AT WORK HERE THAN MEETS THE EYE.
BUT CAVALCANTI MIGHT BE KILLED.
YES, HE MIGHT.
NEVER ATTACK ONE OF YOUR BETTERS.
KRAK
"BETTERS"-- HAH!
AARRGH!
YOU WERE NEVER MY BETTER WITH A KNIFE, BENEDETTO!

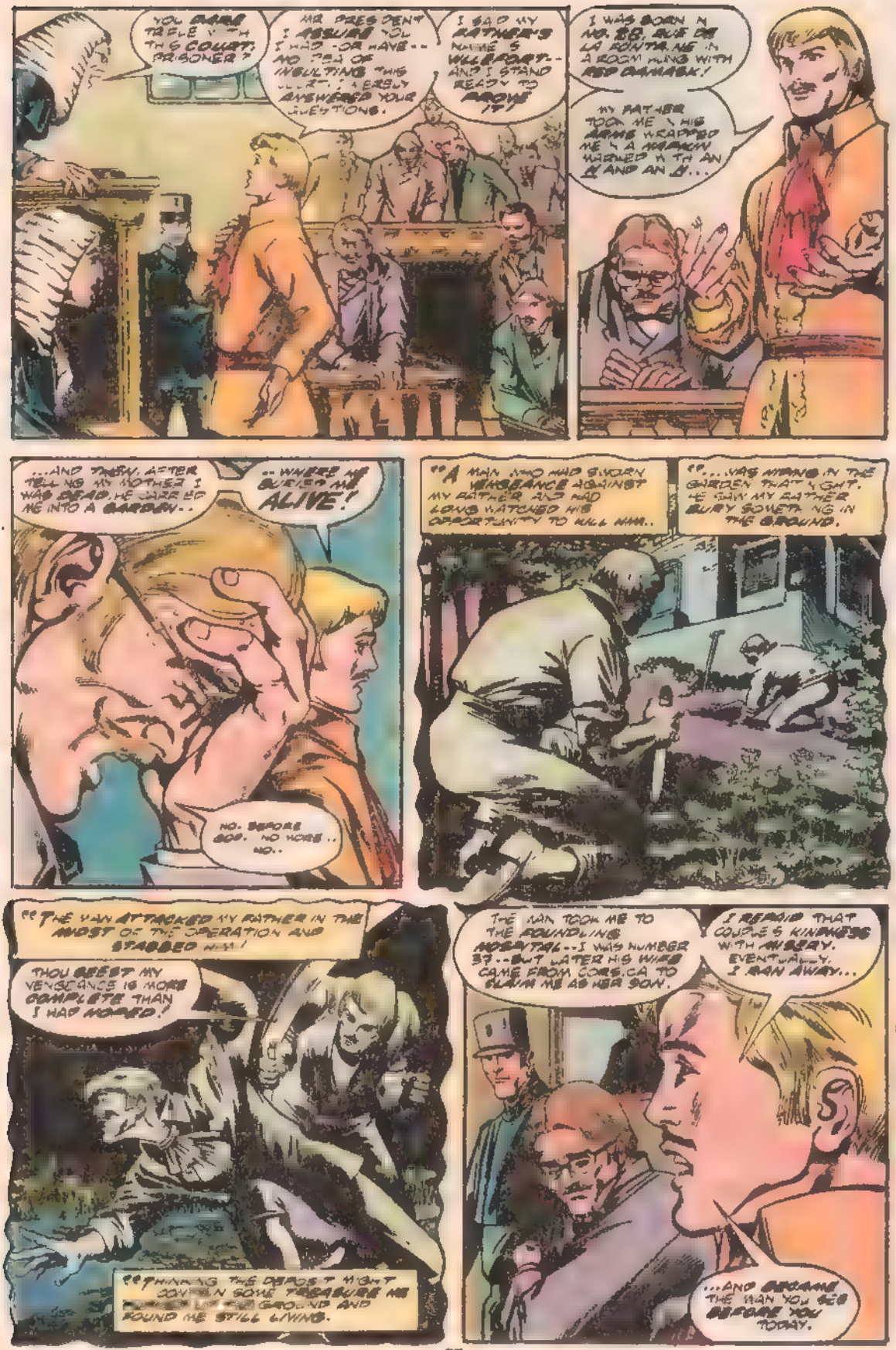
DIE!
TOO SLOW CADEROUSSE! TIME'S RUNNING OUT FOR YOU, OLD MAN!
KDAK!
IN FACT, IF THE TRUTH WERE TO BE TOLD--
IT'S ALL OVER BUT THE SHOOTING.
BROG!
GAME, SET AND MATCH.
KTLNK
YOU'RE AT MY MERCY, CADEROUSSE..
A CITY I DON'T KNOW THE MEANING OF THE WORD!
BENEDETTO..
NO--!!
SHUK!


PLEASE. PLEASE.
YOU ARE DYING, CADEROUSSE. THERE IS NOTHING I CAN DO FOR YOU.
THEN. WITH MY LAST BREATH, I ACCUSE THAT MAN...
WHATEVER HE CALLS HIMSELF, HE IS REALLY BENEDETTO CASPAR ...WE WERE CHAINED TOGETHER ABOARD THE TOULON PRISON GALLEY.
HE ESCAPED TOGETHER BUT HE KNIFES ME. LEFT ME FOR DEAD...
AND NOW YOU ARE DEAD IN TRUTH.
WHO... WHO ARE YOU..!
ONLY A POOR SAILOR.. WHOSE FATHER YOU STOLE FROM AND LEFT TO DIE OF A NUMBER.
...YOOOUUUU...!
ONE
COUNT WHY HAVE YOUR MEN TAKEN CAVALCANTI UNDER GUARD? WHAT'S WRONG
IT SEEMS HE IS NO COUNT, BARON -- BUT AN ESCAPED GALLEY SLAVE.
IT SEEMS WE HAVE ALL BEEN THE VICTIMS OF A GROSS DECEPTION.
THEN... HE HAS NO CLAIM TO THE CAVALCANTI FORTUNE?
NONE WHATSOEVER. TAKE HIM AWAY, JACOPO.
BLAM!
TWO.

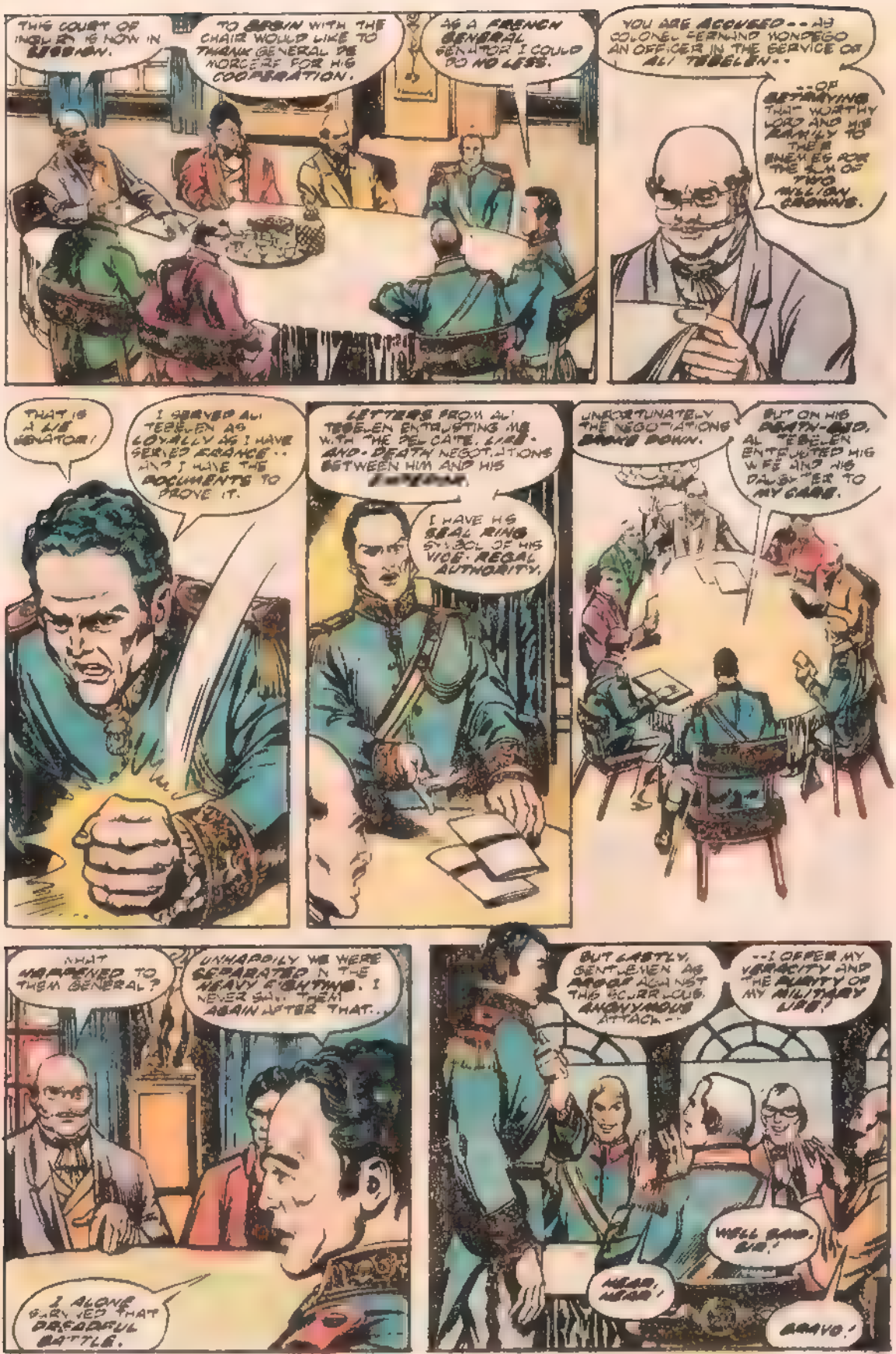
PART 5 :
DAGGER IN THE MIND
JUSTICE WAS SWIFT IN THOSE DAYS... MEN WERE QUICKLY CONDEMNED, WITH OR WITHOUT TRIAL AND THE SENTENCES WERE FINAL...
FOR STEALING A LOAF OF BREAD ON THE TOULON GALLEYS. FOR MURDER LIKE "SEWER COURTESY OF MADAME GUILLOTINE".
THAT'S THE SPIRIT. LADS-TEST LA GUILLOTINE EVEN BEFORE THE ACCUSED HAS GONE TO TRIAL.
IGNORE THE REALITY THAT I WAS FRAMED BY THAT ACCURSED MONTE CRISTO --GOD KNOWS THE REASON WHY FOR I HAVE NEVER DONE HIM ANY HARM.
I HAVE COME TO OFFER COMFORT IN YOUR HOUR OF NEED, MY SON.
I DON'T NEED COMFORT, PRIEST.. I NEED A MIRACLE.


THAT, TOO, CAN BE ARRANGED, MY SON.
YOU!
HEAVEN BE PRAISED, MONTE-CRISTO -- YOURS IS A MURDER I'D WILLINGLY GO TO LA GUILLOTINE FOR!
GAAK!
IDIOT!
I DIDN'T COME HERE TO GIVE YOU A CHANCE TO EXERCISE YOUR MUSCLES BUT YOUR BRAIN!
WHU-U-UOFF!
BDAG!
I OFFER YOU ONE CHANCE TO ESCAPE LA GUILLOTINE, BENEDETTO. TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT.
I-I-- TAKE IT, MILORD.
GOOD.
YOU'LL BE GOING TO TRIAL WITHIN THE WEEK. THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL-- M. DE VILLEFORT HIMSELF-- WILL BE HANDLING YOUR CASE PERSONALLY.
NOW WHEN HE BEGINS TO QUESTION YOU, ANSWER PRECISELY WHAT IS WRITTEN IN THESE PAPERS.
I'LL PLAY MY PART COUNT. BE SURE OF THAT.
IF YOU DO THIS, YOU WILL ESCAPE LA GUILLOTINE. IF YOU FAIL, IT WILL COST YOU YOUR LIFE

MONTE-CRISTO WAS AS GOOD AS HIS WORD. WITHIN A WEEK BENEDETTO WAS STANDING IN THE DOCK IN THE CRIMINAL COURT CHARGED WITH FRAUD AND MURDER...
...AND BY THE TIME PROSECUTOR DE VILLEFORT WAS DONE READING THE INDICTMENT, THERE WASN'T A SOUL IN THE COURTROOM WHO DIDN'T BELIEVE BENEDETTO TO BE GUILTY AS CHARGED!
ACCUSED, YOUR NAME AND SURNAME.
EXCUSE ME, SIR--BUT I SEE YOU ARE GOING TO ADOPT A COURSE OF QUESTIONS THRU WHICH I CANNOT FOLLOW YOU.
IF YOU PLEASE, I WILL ANSWER THEM IN A DIFFERENT ORDER, OR NOT AT ALL.
WILL YOU TELL US YOUR AGE..?! OR IS THAT TOO MUCH TROUBLE AS WELL?!
I AM TWENTY-ONE YEARS OLD OR WILL BE IN A FEW DAYS,
I WAS BORN THE NIGHT OF 27 SEPTEMBER 1817.
AND WHERE WERE YOU BORN ?
AT AUTEUIL, NEAR PARIS.
YOUR PROFESSION ?
FIRST I WAS A BANKER, THEN A PIRATE--AND LATELY I HAVE BECOME A MURDERER!
NOW WILL YOU TELL US YOUR NAME..DAMNED AS IT IS BY ALL YOUR CRIMES ?!
I CANNOT TELL YOU MY NAME SINCE I DO NOT KNOW IT. BUT I KNOW MY FATHER'S NAME--!
IT IS VILLEFORT.. AND HE IS THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL!
HO!


YOU DARE TRIFLE WITH THIS COURT, PRISONER?
MR. PRESIDENT I ASSURE YOU I HAD -OR HAVE-- NO DESIRE OF INSULTING THIS COURT. I ONLY ANSWERED YOUR QUESTIONS.
I SAID MY FATHER'S NAME IS WILLEFORT-- AND I STAND READY TO PROVE IT!
I WAS BORN IN NO. 20, RUE DE LA FONTAINE IN A ROOM HUNG WITH RED DAMASK!
MY FATHER TOOK ME IN HIS ARMS WRAPPED ME IN A MANTLE MARKED WITH AN M AND AN M...
...AND THEN, AFTER TELLING MY MOTHER I WAS DEAD, HE CARRIED ME INTO A GARDEN..
..WHERE HE BURIED ME ALIVE!
NO. BEFORE GOD. NO MORE.. NO..
"A MAN WHO HAD SWORN VENGEANCE AGAINST MY FATHER AND HAD LONG WATCHED HIS OPPORTUNITY TO KILL HIM..
"...WAS HIDING IN THE GARDEN THAT NIGHT. HE SAW MY FATHER BURY SOMETHING IN THE GROUND.
"THE MAN ATTACKED MY FATHER IN THE MIDST OF THE OPERATION AND STABBED HIM!
THOU SEEST MY VENGEANCE IS MORE COMPLETE THAN I HAD HOPED!
"THINKING THE DEAD ST MIGHT CONTAIN SOME TREASURE HE [illegible] GROUND AND FOUND ME STILL LIVING.
THE MAN TOOK ME TO THE FOUNDLING HOSPITAL--I WAS NUMBER 37--BUT LATER HIS WIFE CAME FROM CORSICA TO CLAIM ME AS HER SON.
I REPAID THAT COUPLE'S KINDNESS WITH MURDER. EVENTUALLY, I RAN AWAY...
...AND BECAME THE MAN YOU SEE BEFORE YOU TODAY.

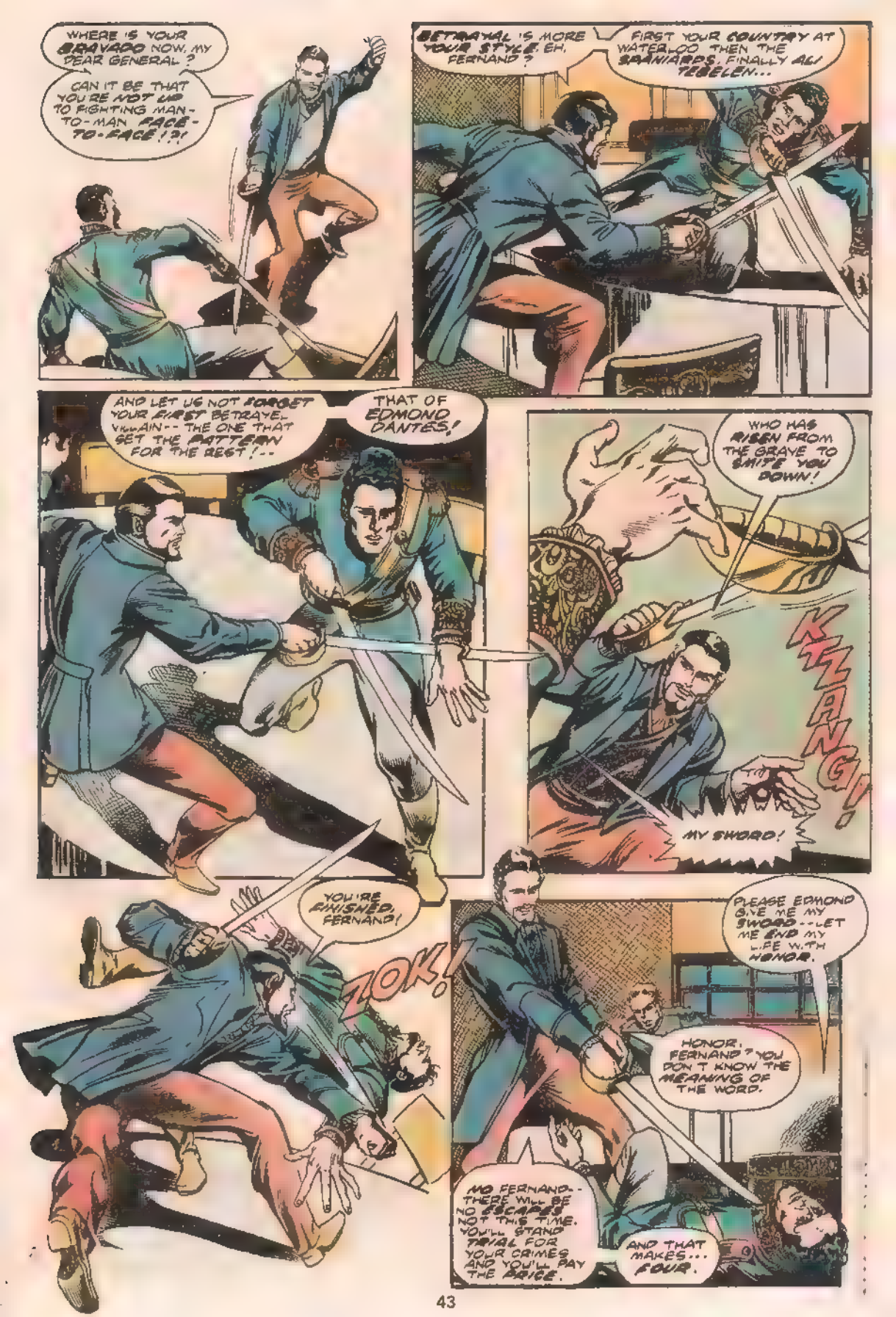
THE PROOFS, MAN -- THE PROOFS--!
THIS TISSUE OF HORRORS MUST BE SUPPORTED BY THE CLEAREST PROOFS!
LOOK AT M. DE VILLEFORT.. AND THEN ASK ME FOR PROOFS!
FATHER, I AM ASKED FOR PROOFS -- DO YOU WANT ME TO GIVE THEM?
NO, NO. IT IS USELESS. I AM DONE.
I... ACKNOWLEDGE MYSELF GUILTY OF ALL THE YOUNG MAN HAS BROUGHT AGAINST ME... AND FROM THIS HOUR HOLD MYSELF UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF MY SUCCESSOR.
AND MAY GOD HAVE MERCY ON MY SOUL.
WELL, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THAT?
THEY'LL FIND EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES, OF COURSE.
WAIT--! WHAT'S THAT NEWSBOY YELLING?
FAMOUS GENERAL ACCUSED OF MURDER AND TREASON!
COUNT DE MORCERF TO BE EXAMINED BY A PARLIAMENTARY BOARD OF INQUIRY!

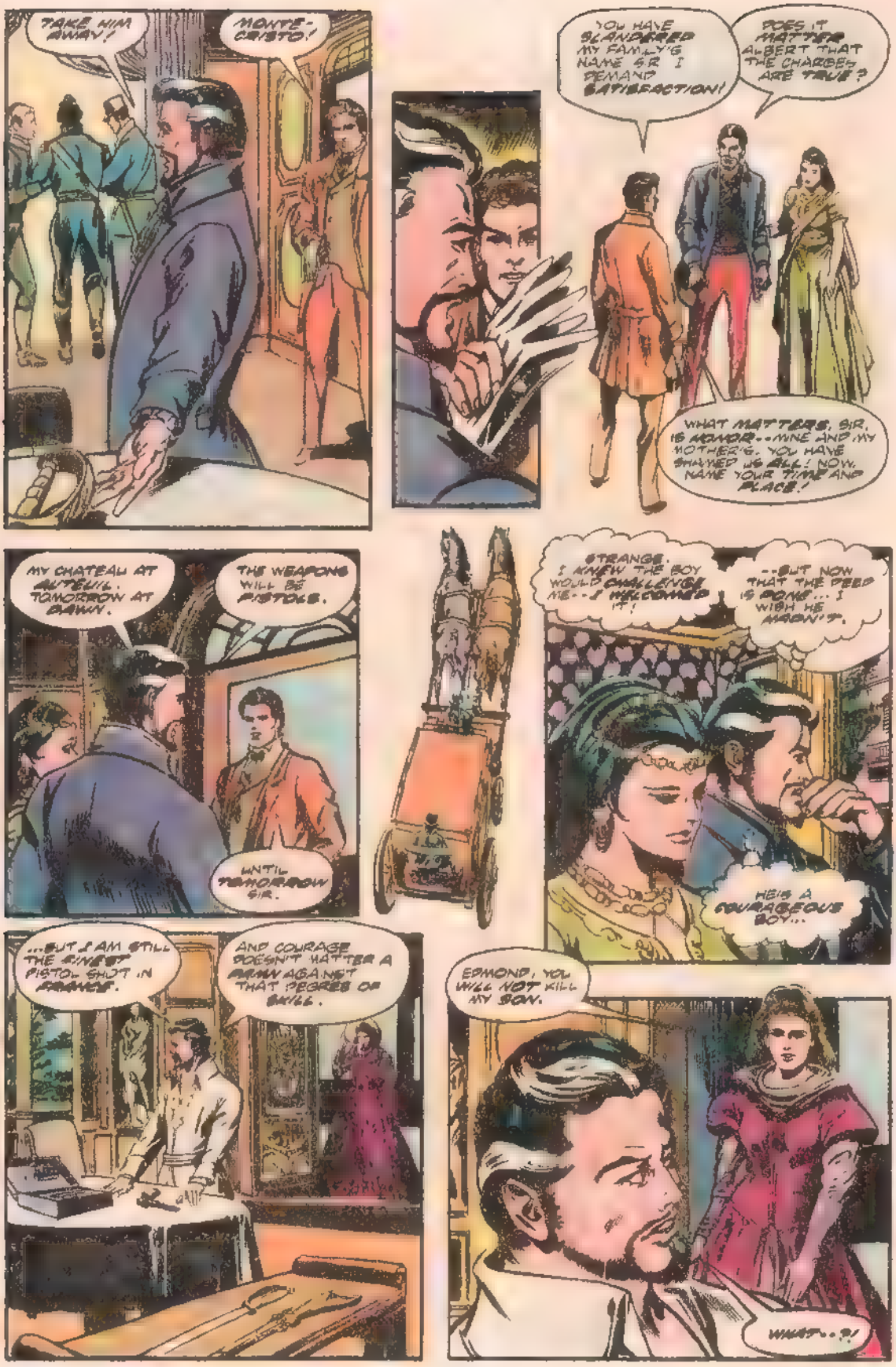

THIS COURT OF INQUIRY IS NOW IN SESSION.
TO BEGIN WITH THE CHAIR WOULD LIKE TO THANK GENERAL DE MORCERF FOR HIS COOPERATION.
AS A FRENCH GENERAL SENATOR I COULD DO NO LESS.
YOU ARE ACQUITTED -- AS COLONEL FERNAND MONDEGO AN OFFICER IN THE SERVICE OF ALI TEBELEN --
-- OF DETAINING THAT WORTHY LORD AND HIS FAMILY TO THEIR ENEMIES FOR THE SUM OF TWO MILLION DRACHMS.
THAT IS A LIE SENATOR!
I SERVED ALI TEBELEN AS LOYALLY AS I HAVE SERVED FRANCE .. AND I HAVE THE DOCUMENTS TO PROVE IT.
LETTERS FROM ALI TEBELEN ENTRUSTING ME WITH THE DELICATE, LIFE- AND-DEATH NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN HIM AND HIS [illegible]
I HAVE HIS SEAL RING SYMBOL OF HIS VICE-REGAL AUTHORITY.
UNFORTUNATELY THE NEGOTIATIONS BROKE DOWN.
BUT ON HIS DEATH-BED, ALI TEBELEN ENTRUSTED HIS WIFE AND HIS DAUGHTER TO MY CARE.
WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM GENERAL?
UNHAPPILY WE WERE SEPARATED IN THE HEAVY FIGHTING. I NEVER SAW THEM AGAIN AFTER THAT..
I ALONE SURVIVED THAT DREADFUL BATTLE.
BUT LASTLY, GENTLEMEN AS PROOF AGAINST THIS SCURRILOUS ANONYMOUS ATTACK --
-- I OFFER MY VERACITY AND THE PURITY OF MY MILITARY LIFE!
WELL SAID, SIR!
HEAR, HEAR!
BRAVO!

AN EXCELLENT PERFORMANCE, MY DEAR FERNAND.
BUT THAT IS ALL IT IS--A SHAM AND A FAKE.
WHO ARE YOU, SIR--? AND WHAT BUSINESS HAVE YOU HERE?!
I AM THE COUNT DE MONTE CRISTO, GENTLEMEN. I AM THE ONE WHO ACCUSES GENERAL DE MORCERF.
I...AND ONE OTHER. THE ONLY OTHER LIVING WITNESS TO WHAT TRULY HAPPENED AT THE BATTLE OF JANINA.
HAYDEE--DAUGHTER OF ALI TEBELEN!
I WAS BUT FOUR YEARS OLD THE NIGHT WE FLED JANINA. EVERYTHING WAS DARK AS MY MOTHER CARRIED ME THRU OUR PALACE...
I COULD HEAR OUR SERVANTS BUSTLING ABOUT LOADING CHESTS OF TREASURE AND GUNPOWDER. THERE WERE SOLDIERS, AS WELL, CARRYING PISTOLS AND LONG RIFLES.
"WE ROWED ACROSS THE LAKE WITH MUFFLED OARS AND ALL WERE FRIGHTENED SAVE MY FATHER...
"OUR DESTINATION WAS A GREAT CAVE WE CALLED KATAPHYGION--OR THE REFUGE. WE WERE TO STAY THERE UNTIL THE RETURN OF THE FRENCH OFFICER MY FATHER HAD SENT TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE EMPEROR.
"WITHIN THE CAVERN WAS STORED 25 MILLION CROWNS IN GOLD AND ABOUT 30,000 POUNDS OF GUNPOWDER.
"MY FATHER'S MOST TRUSTED SERVANT, SELIM, STOOD WATCH OVER US DAY AND NIGHT HOLDING A LIGHTED FUSE. IF WE WERE ATTACKED HIS ORDERS WERE TO FIRE THE POWDER AND BLOW US ALL TO KINGDOM COME.

"SOME DAYS LATER, THE OFFICER RETURNED WITH NEWS THAT THE EMPEROR HAD FORGIVEN HIS FATHER..
"WE ALL REJOICED.. WE THOUGHT OURSELVES SAFE.. AND SELIM EXTINGUISHED THE DEADLY FUSE...
"IT WAS THE LAST THING HE EVER DID.
DIE, DOG!
MY LORD WE ARE BETRAYED--
AARRRGH!
WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS?
I MERELY WISH TO COMMUNICATE THE WILL OF HIS HIGHNESS LORD TEBELEN--
--HE WANTS YOUR HEAD!
THEN LET HIM COME AND TAKE IT!
"THE FRENCHMAN LUNGED FORWARDS AND THE ROOM SUDDENLY FILLED WITH FIRE AND SMOKE AND EXPLOSIONS. AND WHEN THE SMOKE HAD CLEARED, MY FATHER WAS DEAD."
AND THERE SITS THE MAN WHO BETRAYED MY NOBLE FATHER TO HIS ENEMIES--WHO SOLD MY MOTHER AND ME TO THE SLAVE MERCHANT EL-KOBBIR!
FERNAND MONDEGO! THIS MAN YOU CALL THE COUNT DE MORCERF! THIS--ASSASSIN!
THE WOMAN LIES!
NO FERNAND--SHE SPEAKS THE TRUTH
IT IS YOU WHO ARE THE TRAITOR HERE--AND NOW YOUR CRIMES HAVE CAUGHT UP WITH YOU.

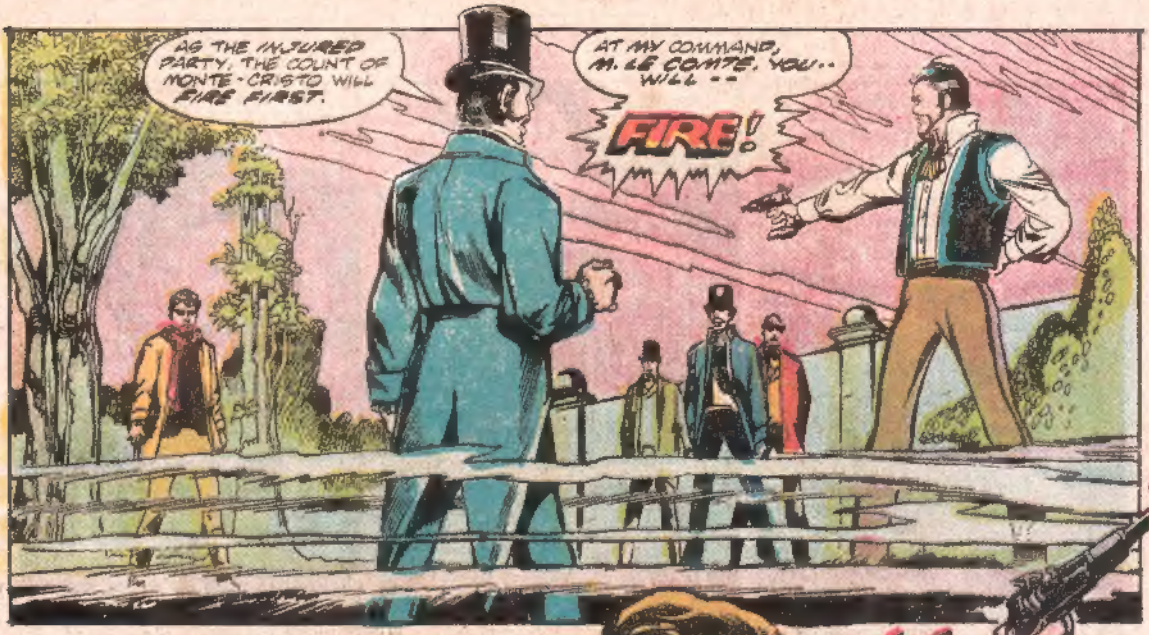
WHO ARE YOU, MONTE-CRISTO ? WHAT HAVE I EVER DONE TO YOU THAT YOU SHOULD HATE ME SO ?!
DOST FERNAND ? YOU TOOK NINETEEN YEARS OF MY LIFE FROM ME -- AND, WORSE THE HAND OF THE WOMAN I LOVED.
DANTES !
VERY WELL, COUNT JAIL-BAIT -- FOR THAT IS WHAT YOU TRULY ARE, DANTES -- YOU MAY HAVE RUINED ME --
HOLA !
YOU CAN'T ESCAPE ME FOREVER, DANTES !
-- BUT I'LL HAVE THE SATISFACTION OF KILLING YOU FOR IT !
I DON'T INTEND TO, FERNAND !

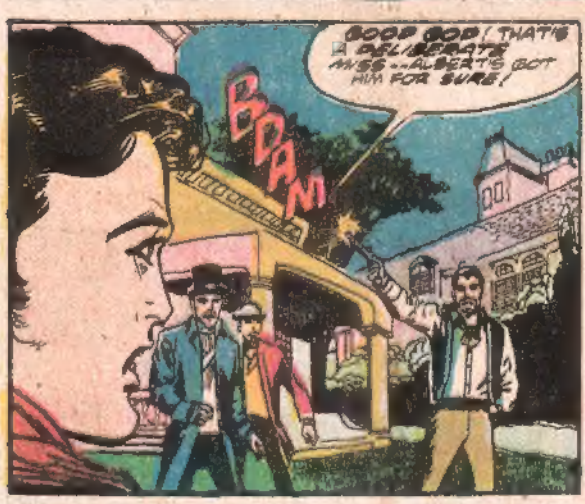

WHERE IS YOUR BRAVADO NOW, MY DEAR GENERAL?
CAN IT BE THAT YOU'RE NOT UP TO FIGHTING MAN-TO-MAN FACE-TO-FACE!?!
BETRAYAL IS MORE YOUR STYLE, EH, FERNAND?
FIRST YOUR COUNTRY AT WATERLOO THEN THE SPANIARDS, FINALLY ALI TEBELEN...
AND LET US NOT FORGET YOUR FIRST BETRAYAL, VILLAIN -- THE ONE THAT SET THE PATTERN FOR THE REST!--
THAT OF EDMOND DANTES!
WHO HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE TO SMITE YOU DOWN!
KLANG!
MY SWORD!
YOU'RE FINISHED, FERNAND!
OK!
PLEASE EDMOND GIVE ME MY SWORD--LET ME END MY LIFE WITH HONOR.
HONOR, FERNAND? YOU DON'T KNOW THE MEANING OF THE WORD.
NO FERNAND--THERE WILL BE NO ESCAPE NOT THIS TIME. YOU'LL STAND TRIAL FOR YOUR CRIMES AND YOU'LL PAY THE PRICE.
AND THAT MAKES... FOUR.


TAKE HIM AWAY!
MONTE-CRISTO!
YOU HAVE SLANDERED MY FAMILY'S NAME OR I DEMAND SATISFACTION!
DOES IT MATTER ALBERT THAT THE CHARGES ARE TRUE?
WHAT MATTERS, SIR, IS HONOR--MINE AND MY MOTHER'S. YOU HAVE SHAMED US ALL. NOW, NAME YOUR TIME AND PLACE!
MY CHATEAU AT AUTEUIL. TOMORROW AT DAWN.
THE WEAPONS WILL BE PISTOLS.
UNTIL TOMORROW SIR.
STRANGE. I KNEW THE BOY WOULD CHALLENGE ME--I WELCOMED IT!
--BUT NOW THAT THE DEED IS DONE... I WISH HE HADN'T.
HE'S A COURAGEOUS BOY...
...BUT I AM STILL THE FINEST PISTOL SHOT IN FRANCE.
AND COURAGE DOESN'T MATTER A DAMN AGAINST THAT DEGREE OF SKILL.
EDMOND, YOU WILL NOT KILL MY SON.
WHAT...?!

WHAT-- WHAT NAME DID YOU PRONOUNCE, MADAME DE MORCERF?
YOURS! WHICH I ALONE, PERHAPS, HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN, EDMOND. IT'S MERCEDES WHO HAS COME TO YOU NOW...
MERCEDES IS DEAD, MADAME.
MERCEDES LIVES, SIR, AND SHE REMEMBERS! FOR SHE ALONE RECOGNIZED YOU WHEN SHE SAW YOU-- BY YOUR VOICE EDMOND!
BY THE VERY SOUND OF YOUR VOICE AND FROM THAT MOMENT SHE HAS FOLLOWED YOUR STEPS, WATCHED YOU. FEARED YOU...
SHE NEEDS NOT INQUIRE WHAT HAND HAD SANCTION M. DE MORCERF.
FERNAND, DO YOU MEAN?! SINCE WE ARE RECALLING NAMES, LET US REMEMBER THEM ALL!
FOR IF I HAVE SWORN TO AVENGE MYSELF, IT IS NOT ON THE GENERAL OR THE COUNT BUT ON THE FISHERMAN FERNAND--
--HUSBAND OF THE CATALAN MERCEDES!
YOU SAW ME ARRESTED, MADAME BUT YOU DO NOT KNOW WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THAT.
I SPENT FOURTEEN YEARS IN A DUNGEON OF THE CHATEAU D'IF, NOT A QUARTER OF A LEAGUE FROM WHERE YOU LIVED!
YOU DO NOW KNOW THAT EACH DAY OF THOSE FOURTEEN YEARS, I RENEWED THE VOW OF VENGEANCE I MADE THE FIRST DAY!
AND YET, I KNEW NOT THAT YOU HAD MARRIED FERNAND, MY REBELLOR.
OR THAT MY FATHER HAD DIED OF HUNGER!

OH, EDMOND, FORGIVE-- FORGIVE FOR MY SAKE, WHO LOVES YOU STILL.
IF YOU MUST HAVE YOUR REVENGE, THEN LET IT FALL ON THE GUILTY -- ON FERNAND, ON ME!--
--BUT NOT ON MY SON!
EDMOND, SINCE FIRST I KNEW YOU, I HAVE ADORED YOUR NAME, RESPECTED YOUR MEMORY.
IF YOU KNEW THE PRAYERS I HAVE ADDRESSED TO GOD FOR YOU... OH MY LOVE-- GUILTY AS I WAS I, TOO, HAVE SUFFERED MUCH..
HAVE YOU GUESSED THAT YOUR FATHER DIED IN YOUR ABSENCE?!
HAVE YOU SEEN THE WOMAN YOU LOVED GIVING HER HAND TO YOUR RIVAL, WHILE YOU WERE ROTTING IN THE BOTTOM OF A DUNGEON?!
NO!
BUT I HAVE SEEN HIM WHO I LOVED ON THE POINT OF MURDERING MY SON!
WHAT WOULD YOU ASK OF ME, MERCEDES-- YOUR SON'S LIFE?
VERY WELL, THEN, HE SHALL LIVE.
AND INSTEAD OF ALBERT'S BLOOD STAINING THE GROUND TOMORROW, IT WILL BE MINE.
OH, MERCEDES...
... WHAT A FOOL I WAS NOT TO TEAR MY HEART OUT ON THE DAY WHEN I RESOLVED TO AVENGE MYSELF.


AS THE INJURED PARTY, THE COUNT OF MONTE-CRISTO WILL FIRE FIRST.
AT MY COMMAND, M. LE COMTE, YOU... WILL --
FIRE!


GOOD GOD! THAT'S A DELIBERATE MISS--ALBERT'S GOT HIM FOR SURE!
BOOM

BOOM

SHE TOLD YOU!

SHE DID, MICHEL. BECAUSE SHE GUESSED YOUR INTENTION.
AFTER ALL MY FAMILY HAS TAKEN FROM YOU COUNT, I COULD NOT TAKE YOUR LIFE AS WELL.

MY FATHER'S DEBT WILL BE PAID, SIR. IN THE ONLY WAY IT CAN BE, WITH SWEAT AND TOIL AND... BLOOD.
I HAVE JOINED THE ARMY, AND AM DETERMINED TO MAKE DE MORCERF AN HONORABLE NAME ONCE MORE.
AND YOUR MOTHER?
SHE HAS GIVEN ALL OUR WEALTH TO CHARITY... AND WILL LIVE THE REST OF HER LIFE ON THE FRUITS OF HER OWN LABOR.
I DID NOT MEAN THAT TO HAPPEN.
BUT IT WAS, M'SIEU.
I HOPE WE MEET AGAIN, COUNT. FAREWELL.
AND THUS, MY QUEST ENDS AS IT BEGAN -- WITH EDMOND DANTES STANDING ALONE.
NOT SO, MY NOBLE LORD.
FOR, SO LONG AS YOU LIVE HAYDEE WILL STAND BESIDE YOU.
YOU HAVE MADE MY FORTUNE, CHILD. YOU ARE FREE NOW.
AND IN MY FREEDOM, I CHOOSE TO STAY WITH YOU.
I LOVE YOU, NOBLE MONTE-CRISTO.
DEAR GOD, CAN THIS BE TRUE? CAN YOU BE THIS MERCIFUL? I WANTED TO PUNISH MYSELF, BUT GOD HAS PARDONED ME TWICE OVER!
OH, MY DEAREST HAYDEE... LOVE ME, THEN, WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AS I SHALL TRY TO LOVE YOU.
WHO KNOWS...
...PERHAPS YOUR LOVE WILL MAKE ME FORGET ALL I WISH NOT TO REMEMBER.

Alexander
Dumas

ON SALE NOW!

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